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THE
ITALIAN NOVELISTS.
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

The
Italian Novelists.

BY THOMAS ROSCOE.

VOL. I.



Page 38.

LONDON:

Printed for SEPTIMUS PROBERT, 23. Old Bond Street.

1825.



**THE
ITALIAN NOVELISTS:**

**SELECTED FROM THE
MOST APPROVED AUTHORS**

**IN
THAT LANGUAGE;**

**FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD DOWN TO THE CLOSE OF
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY:**

**ARRANGED
IN AN HISTORICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL SERIES.**

**TRANSLATED FROM THE
ORIGINAL ITALIAN.**

**ACCOMPANIED WITH
NOTES, CRITICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL.**

By THOMAS ROSCOE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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1825.



**J. M'Creery, Toole Court,
Chancery Lane, London.**

PREFACE.

AT a period when so high a degree of literary interest and curiosity appears to be directed towards the early traditionary history of almost every people, as exhibited in its prose fiction and romance, little apology will, perhaps, be thought due for the appearance of the following work. Italy, to which all the more polished nations of Europe confess themselves to be, in many respects, so largely indebted, will, in this point of view, likewise, be found to have attracted, with justice, our gratitude and regard. In addition to the very ample researches of native historians, of Muratori, Crescimbeni, and Tiraboschi, (among the most voluminous and exact writers of their age,) the subject of Italian prose fiction has more recently employed the attention of living authors of the highest repute. Among these the French and Germans may

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decidedly be said to have taken the lead ; although neither of those nations can be admitted to have drawn more abundantly than our own from the sources of Italian fiction. In no branch, indeed, of literary intercourse, has the connexion between the English and Italian writers been more strikingly displayed than in the drama of the one as founded on the popular tales of the other ; our obligations to the latter, even earlier than the age of Chaucer, having been clearly proved, and traced in a connected chain down to the present time. Some of these coincidences will be found very accurately and laboriously investigated in the modern histories of Boutterwek and the Schlegels, as well as in those of M. Ginguené and M. Sismondi, authors who have afforded a model for several English works upon a similar plan, among the best of which may be mentioned those of Mr. Dunlop, and Mr. Mills.

While by all these it is clearly admitted that the Italian novel has furnished a rich storehouse for the poets and dramatists of other nations, more especially of our own succeeding drama-

tists, through the times of Shakspeare, Marlowe, and Chapman, Massinger, Ford, and Shirley, until those of Milman, Byron, Mrs. Hemans, and Cornwall, names not unworthy the genius of their predecessors; and while so much erudition and research have been employed in tracing the origin of the respective fables, it may be considered a little strange, that no progressive and detailed view of the subject, and of the tales themselves, should hitherto have appeared. Numerous works, indeed, of individual novelists were early diffused abroad both in France and England; and are supposed, in a great measure, to have corrected the too prevalent taste for the Gothic or romantic fiction, which they would appear with us in a short time to have superseded. The very pleasing variety they afforded in pictures of a sombre or enlivening cast, equally adapted to the comic and to the tragic muse, failed not to prove as agreeable also in the form of simple narratives to the general reader. Hence a relish for the chivalric romance never afterwards resumed its former influence in England, although the translations from the Italian

were restricted to a very few authors, and often rendered in an imperfect and garbled manner. Thus the versions of the Decameron, and of some of the novels of Ser Giovanni, Cinthio, and Bandello, as found scattered through old English works, such as Paynter's Palace of Pleasure, were of this character, and yet at the same time furnished the favourite subjects of our early English dramatists.

Nor is it merely in the view of affording fables and materials for imitation to other writers, that the Italian tales will be found deserving of our notice ; as, besides their intrinsic merit, they exhibit not unfrequently curious pictures of the history, manners, and feelings of the people during the respective periods in which they were composed. And so accurately were some of these known to be drawn from the life, in many points both of incident and description, as sometimes to induce their authors to announce them as true ; while it is certain that, in several instances, they took their origin in real events. Thus nearly all the novelists refer the occasion of their narratives to some probable inci-

dents, from which, in imitation of their great master Boccaccio, they seldom swerved. To this air of nature and probability they are perhaps indebted for much of the interest they create; an interest wholly distinct from that produced by the chivalric and national romance, of which Italy would appear to have been for the most part destitute, though abounding in romantic poems, and surrounded by nations, each possessing its peculiar prose romance. And what may, at first, seem still more strange, the materials composing the early Italian novel appear to be neither of a very genuine and national character, nor much in unison with the vivacious genius of the people. They may be traced to a great variety of sources; to foreign languages, customs, and manners, during the transmission of the stream of literature from the East to the West. Their origin and gradual progress must thus be sought for in the Fables of Bidpai, the earliest work in the Indian language, above two thousand years old; in the *Gesta Romanorum*, a collection of stories in the Latin language, one of the richest mines

of the Italian novelists; and in the Seven Wise Masters, of Arabic origin, furnishing the earliest known materials for Italian fiction. To these we may add the French *Contes* and *Fabliaux* and the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, which appear to have supplied more immediate hints for some of the stories in the Decameron, by which they were shortly followed. From this last period, occurring during the fourteenth century, the chronological series of Italian novelists will be made pretty clearly apparent in the following selections, so as to enable the translator to confine his present remarks to such portions of his subject as will be found least dwelt upon in the introductory notices.

It is observed by M. Ginguené, that those works of Boccaccio to which their author attached the greatest importance, would most probably have fallen into oblivion, had he never written his Decameron. "Whence, then," he inquires, "arose the extraordinary reputation he has acquired? From a source whence he least expected it, a work apparently of a trifling description, a collection of stories which he himself

declares he esteemed so little, as to have written them expressly for the purpose of amusing his countrywomen; and to which he attached so little importance as only to regret, at a more mature age, his having written them at all. In fact, he expected, like Petrarch, to build his fame upon his classical labours, in a language becoming fast obsolete; whereas it was destined to be the reward only of some fanciful effusions, expressed in an infant tongue, which he was at the pains of improving and perfecting, and which had until then been abandoned to the people, in the common affairs of life. He thus became the founder of a new prose language, as Dante and Petrarch had been the authors of a poetic one, distinguished for elegance, harmony, happy selections of words and periods, in fine, of a very polished and cultivated tongue."

In further illustration of the form and character of Boccaccio's work, the first of its class, and which may be esteemed the model of most of his successors in the same career, no clearer idea can be given than in the words of the same distinguished author, who deservedly enjoys the

highest reputation for the extent and exactness of his literary researches, both in his own and other countries. The reader will hence be enabled to form a much juster opinion of the nature, the frame-work, and manner of the Italian tales, as they are usually found embodied, than it would be in the power of the translator, in any other way, to afford. And such a view, perhaps, being applicable more or less to all subsequent authors of the tales included in the present work, may be deemed the more essential on account of their isolated appearance in the form of specimens, which can scarcely convey a clear notion of the author's scope and object in the narration of his stories.

“The occasion,” observes M. Ginguené, “that gave rise to this pleasing production, or at least as was ingeniously feigned, appeared little adapted in itself for the production of pleasant stories. I have already alluded, in the *Life of Petrarch*, to that terrific pestilence which desolated all Europe, more particularly Italy, in the year 1348. The city of Florence, beyond any other, experienced the extent of its ravages,

being nearly depopulated, its streets and squares, and its very temples, abandoned to the silence and gloom of death. Yet under circumstances so deplorable as these, seven beautiful and reputable young women, are supposed to meet together in the church of Santa Maria Novella : and after conversing a little while upon the public calamity, one of them proposes to her companions to seek refuge somewhere in the country, and attempt, by amusing themselves, to withdraw their minds from the terrific picture before them. A delightful spot, affording a sweet and salubrious air, with all the recreations of a fine season, is selected with this view ; but as ladies are not accustomed to venture alone, three young cavaliers of the city, the friends or lovers of the party, agree to bear them company, in order to add to the pleasures of a select and reputable, yet liberal society. Their preparations are quickly despatched ; and on the ensuing morning the happy young people are two miles upon their route from Florence. They soon after take up their residence at a country seat, deliciously situated, with nume-

rous and commodious apartments, and embellished with beautiful walks and gardens. Here, banishing the recollection of the late scenes, they devoted their time to the recreation of music, singing, and dancing, pleasant walks by day, and sweet and courtly converse in the evenings. Sometimes they seated themselves in the verdant shade, during the noontide heats, beguiling their hours with pleasant or pathetic tales, often a little satirical, often a little highly coloured, just as it came into their heads. But they always took care to prevent confusion in the recital, by observing strict order and decorum, apportioning to each day its allowance of alternate tales.

“ Each lady is chosen, in turn, queen of the day, enjoying the supreme command in relation to the order of the festival, the various amusements, the distribution of time, and the kind of stories to be told ; while the same privilege is awarded to the gentlemen. The temporary president directs the rank in which they are to speak, when the circle is filled up, consisting only of ten persons, who are each compelled to

pay the pleasing tribute, until the recital has gone round. Ten days are devoted to this species of pastime, intermixed with rural pursuits, the work thus naturally dividing itself into ten parts, composed each of ten novels, from which it derives its title of *Decameron*, borrowed from the Greek, signifying ten days. It was thus Boccaccio conferred a new frame-work upon the prose-fiction of his country, in a similar manner as on its heroic poetry by his *ottava rima*; while he introduced, likewise, into the eclogue and the idyl, the mixed prose and verse adapted to pastoral composition, and of which Sannazaro afterwards so beautifully availed himself.

“ Still it is not asserted that the merit of this arrangement belongs wholly to the Florentine novelist; the same easy and natural method of interweaving fabulous recitals, until they have completed the scope intended for them, being in part familiar to earlier writers of fiction, who are said to have flourished in the east. Like many other inventions, it traces its origin to India, and to a very ancient production, that is now become known by an interesting account

given in the Memoirs of the French Academy of Belles Lettres. There is a certain king, who maintains an establishment of seven mistresses for his seraglio, and of seven philosophers for his council. Deceived by the calumnies of one of these seven ladies, he is induced to condemn his own son to death. The seven philosophers, being informed of this sentence, come to an agreement, in order to prevent its execution, that they will each of them pass a whole day in the king's company, and dissuade him, by the recital of apt stories, from the execution of his son during that day. The first of these succeeded in the attempt by relating two adventures; but when he had concluded, the wicked fair one present, told one in her turn, which destroying the good effect of the former, the king declared that his son should be executed on the morrow. The next morning the second philosopher tried his skill, relating such facts as wholly deterred the king from his purpose; which is soon, however, resumed, when he hears a fresh story from the lips of his fair mistress. It is this singular alternation of recitals and re-

solutions, continued during seven days, cancelling each other as fast as they are told, that forms the ground-work of the romance. The king is at length convinced of the innocence of his son, and is determined to decapitate the lady in her turn, from which he is only dissuaded by the generosity of the young prince, who is at the pains of proving, by another apt apologue, that his fair foe ought not to be put to death. Still the king insists that she ought to suffer the slight punishment of losing her ears, and that unruly member the tongue, that had been guilty of the calumny: this calls forth another fable, in which the lady proves that it would be a pity to disfigure her in this way; and his majesty is content that she should escape by simply performing public penance.

“The resemblance of this romance to that of *The Thousand and One Nights*, in which the sleepless sultaness Scheherazade, amuses the sultan with the same number of stories, in order to save her own head, can hardly be overlooked. With Boccaccio's *Decameron*, however, it has fewer points in common; though the object of

both would appear to be the same; that of including a number of persons, who in a given space of time, and with the same view, relate a certain number of tales. There exist other more minute coincidences, and even imitations, to be explained only in the following manner. The Indian Romance, of which Sendebad is announced as the author, was successively rendered into Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, and Greek, besides being imitated in Latin, during the twelfth century, by the Monk Giovanni, in a work entitled *Dolopathos*, or Romance of the King and his Seven Sages. It was also rendered into French verse by a poet named Hebers, and into prose by an unknown hand, with various alterations in the form and substance, as well as in the number of the novels. Three of these are found in the *Decameron*, from which it appears probable that Boccaccio must have possessed a French or Latin copy of the *Dolopathos*, and from the same source have derived his idea of including his hundred novels in one frame. This he executed, however, with the freedom of true genius, which, while it imitates, creates;

betraying nothing of the servility of a copyist. In the same manner he will be found to have made use of the ancient Fabliaux, as first mentioned by Fauchet, who, besides the three novels drawn from the *Dolopathos* of Hebers, pointed out five other tales, of which the subjects were taken from Rutebeuf, and Vistace, or Huistace d'Amiens."* On this account Boccaccio has been subjected by Caylus and Barbazan, in their inquiries into the old French fablers, to the idle charge of plagiarism, with much the same degree of justice as our own Shakspeare, Pope, and Byron, all of whom have excited the irritability of their respective critics. Besides, the far more abundant plagiarisms, if such they are to be esteemed, of Molière and La Fontaine from the Italian novel writers, ought to have had some weight with French authors in striking a literary balance, as they have until recently been too apt to do, with the Italians. M. Ginguené, however, very fully vindicates Boccaccio from this charge; declaring, on the other hand, how much the

* Ginguené, *Histoire Littéraire d'Italie*, b. ii. pp. 75, 76.

French nation ought to feel grateful to him, for his masterly improvement of a few of their naked and jejune tales, which he has embellished with all the ornaments of a rich inventive fancy, and returned to them in a brighter and nobler form. Had Boccaccio, indeed, and his successors, been compelled, in justice to their authorities, to specify the various sources from which their materials were drawn, their commentaries must, in many instances, have exceeded the length of their tales. Upon this principle the authors of the Arabian Tales, of the *Novelle Antiche*, and of various works and histories almost innumerable, would all have been entitled to assert their claims; while the critics of the nations from which the latter were borrowed might, with equal reason, complain of the piracies of the novelist, in suppressing authorities of which they were probably themselves unable to assign the origin.

It was Boccaccio's object, when he undertook to write his tales for the amusement of the young princess Maria, to draw materials from the greatest variety of sources he could com-

mand; and the same system appears to have been adopted by almost all his successors, who availed themselves of their great model with less ceremony than he had observed towards other writers. It is perhaps with authors, as with nations themselves; their depredations upon each other are mutual. At least this assertion may be applied with peculiar justice to Italian novelists and to Italian states; both having been strongly addicted to an incessant predatory warfare and pillage upon the provinces of each other. It was thus, that the "Cento Novelle Antiche" became a kind of common property, whence originated various versions of the same story, thereby affording us the advantage of a selection of the best. It is often curious to trace their progress from the *Novellino*, or "Hundred Ancient Tales," through different channels, until they are hardly to be recognized in their new or foreign dress. The simple, and sometimes ingenious traits contained in the *Novellino*, with its rude and unlaboured anecdotes, became, under the influence of genius, like that of Boccaccio, the source of the most humorous or pathetic narra-

tives. These, in common with history, both national and foreign, translations of Eastern works, and oral traditions, popular among the Italians, supplied him with ample materials for the exercise of his eloquent and inventive powers, which, for fanciful embellishment, ease and elegance of narration, and a pervading interest, have never been surpassed. The lives and legends of the monks furnished him with additional sources of satire and amusement, said to have been extremely agreeable to the taste of his Fiammetta, which probably induced him never to spare them, in those harsh or burlesque portraits with which so many of his tales abound.

Again, the French Fabliaux, the collections and adventures of the old minstrels, presented him with incidents of another kind; insomuch that the merit of original invention, so disputable in the early literature of every country, can seldom be claimed even by the Italians, for their illustrious countryman. The learned and laborious Manni, who refers us to almost all the authorities of Boccaccio, as far as they can now be ascertained, would assume that the whole of

the Decameron owed its existence to ancient histories, facts, and anecdotes, along with a store of native traditional matter. Such an opinion, however, like that of some other critics, in regard to his romance of Admetus, who would resolve all the characters into real personages, must rest merely upon conjecture. It is probable, indeed, that the novelist may have intended to designate himself in one of the fictitious narrators; Dioneo and Fiammetta are evidently lovers, who are said to recite together the adventures of Arcite and Palamon; but who were really alluded to, in the other personages of the work, would appear of little importance. The same adventures, so beautifully imitated in the poem of our own Dryden, form the subject of Boccaccio's Teseide, composed likewise at the request of his Fiammetta, the Princess of Naples, while he himself is supposed to have assumed the name of Dioneo,

The Decameron having been produced subsequent to the year 1348, could not have been written in early youth; it occupied him for more than three years, and is mentioned by him as

a long and laborious task, not brought to a conclusion until the author had nearly attained the age of forty. Indeed, the intrinsic evidence afforded of this, in the knowledge it displays of human life, the contrast of characters, its mature reflections, and the cultivation and polish of its language, seems to place the date of its composition beyond a doubt. The author, therefore, never pleaded youth in extenuation of some of those high wrought pictures, either of a satirical or amatory character, which, at the instigation of his patron princess, he was too fond of portraying; and which must appeal for their excuse only to the manners of the times, and the peculiar circumstances under which they were delineated. The levity and corruption of the period in which the writer flourished, had been further augmented by that dreadful scourge which so often ravaged the fairest portions of Italy, and which, by the terrific pictures of mortality, that it presents to the imagination and to the eye, might be supposed, upon a first view, calculated to produce quite an opposite effect. Such a feeling is very powerfully im-

pressed by his able and eloquent description of the plague of 1348, serving for an introduction to a work, confessedly written, under such circumstances, with a view of affording pleasure and amusement. Yet this apparent contradiction serves more strikingly to display the consummate art and knowledge of the novelist: such a picture being known to be only too faithful a representation of scenes which exist at such a period, in all their appalling reality. Though contrasted in many points, in others it can hardly be pronounced inferior in grandeur and pathos to that exhibited by Thucydides, in his account of the sufferings of the Athenians.

We accordingly find, that, in the manner of introducing his tales, Boccaccio became the model and the envy of his successors. None of these, however excellent in their respective characters, can be said to have fully equalled him in ease and variety of manner and subject. In the latter were comprehended, in the words of M. Ginguené, "the roguish and libertine priests, whose debaucheries disgraced that pe-

riod; greedy, luxurious, and abandoned monks; easy and credulous husbands; wily coquettes; young persons devoted to a life of pleasure; avaricious old men and women; cruel and tyrannical masters; frank and courteous cavaliers; ladies falling a victim to their own passions, or to the jealousy of their husbands; together with corsairs, hermits, jugglers, performers of false miracles; in short, people of all ranks and conditions, of every country and every age, invested with their peculiar passions, customs, and language; these are the materials which fill up the immense scope of his design, and which persons, even of the most fastidious taste, cannot refuse to admire."*

Such will be found to constitute a portion of the merits that have established the fame of the *Decameron*; the earliest regular production of its class in the series of Italian prose-fictions, and deserving, on this account, of a more particular exposition than the work of any other succeeding novelist. Numerous versions, however, having from time to time been laid before the

* *Ginguené, Literary History of Italy, vol. iii. p. 99.*

public, dating from the age of Elizabeth down to our own; the specimens, in the present instance, will be restricted to a comparatively small number, embracing only a few of the most pleasing and unexceptionable tales. Those of his most distinguished followers will be introduced, in proportion to their respective characters and merits. Though not affording the same rich and varied materials as the tales of Boccaccio, for the use of succeeding writers, for the Molières, the La Fontaines, the Shakspeares, and Drydens, of other countries, (all of whom, along with many German and Spanish poets, will be found indebted to them for subjects;) they are still no less curious and interesting in a secondary point of view. They are, moreover, distinct in genius and manner from their great prototypes, displaying, in reference both to them and to one another, a pleasing diversity, no less in regard to style than the materials they afford. They have not indeed, like them, furnished Molière with his *Ecole des Maris*, and his *George Dandin*; Chaucer, with his *Learned Clerk*, and other tales; Dryden, with his *Sigismond* and

Guiscard, his Theodore and Honoria, his Arcite and Palamon. Yet they are not destitute of all claims in this respect. Next to those of Boccaccio, the novels of Ser Giovanni may be esteemed among the most pleasing and natural, equally abounding in humorous and pathetic traits; attractive enough to have supplied scenes for the poet and the dramatist. At the head of these occurs the name of Shakspeare, whose liveliest vein, in one or two of his happiest comedies,* may be traced to the rich mine of incident contained in this Italian Novelist.

The style and manner of Sacchetti, as well as those of his more immediate successors, excepting Ser Giovanni, differ still more widely, even than others of a later period, from the model of Boccaccio, being far less polished and ornamental, and more brief and condensed in point of incident and materials. But as it would be a vain attempt to enter in this place into any thing like a comparative view of their merits, it will be necessary to refer the reader to the more ample and detailed accounts given by M. Gin-

* The Merry Wives of Windsor. The Merchant of Venice.

guéné, and by Mr. Dunlop, relating to the peculiar characteristics of the Italian Novelists. In the works indeed of both these writers, to which the translator confesses himself largely indebted, will be found such rich and varied views regarding the literature of the people of whom they treat; such depth of erudition and fulness of illustration, mingled with so many lively remarks and anecdotes, as cannot fail to prove an ample recompense for the time bestowed upon their perusal. To some of their German and Italian contemporaries, and, in particular, to Fabroni and Moreri, and to the predecessors of the latter, to Tiraboschi, Crescimbeni, and Muratori, the translator has to confess his frequent obligations on points of critical and historical information.

Among other specimens given in the following pages, will be found the originals of several very beautiful and classical imitations from the pens of living poets of distinguished celebrity; of Milman, of Barry Cornwall, Leigh Hunt, and Lloyd; names which may compete in their respective classes, with the genius of their proto-

types. These will be perused with a double relish, which the translator can only hope will not be materially diminished, by the inadequacy of his own powers to do justice to their merits or to those of other portions of the work.

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Novelle Antiche.

Of which the following is the ancient title: "*Novelle Antiche*:" and in the frontispiece: "Fiori di parlare, di belle cortesie, e di belle valentie e doni, secondo ke per lo tempo passato anno fatto molti valentuomini," &c.

VOL. I.

B

IL NOVELLINO,

LIBRO DI NOVELLE E DI BEL PARLAR GENTILE.

THE work thus entitled, containing the *Cento Novelle antiche*, or, *Hundred ancient Tales*, is a collection of the earliest prose fictions now extant in the Italian tongue. The exact period of their production, and the names of their respective authors, are equally unknown to us; a circumstance which, combined with their own intrinsic character, seems to establish their claim to equal antiquity with the rise and formation of the *lingua volgare* of the South. Many of them are referred by Italian critics and historians to an age anterior to that of Dante, while it is agreed, that few of them are the production of the same or of a subsequent era.

Those who have made the most minute researches into the subject, Salviati, Salvini, Manni, Tiraboschi, &c. differ greatly in their opinion, both as to the period and the origin of the ancient Tales. Yet the learned Manni, editor of the "*Novellino*," to whom,

perhaps, the greatest degree of credit is due, conjectures they must have been written in the 13th century, not long after the death of the tyrant Ezzelin da Romano, about the year 1359. The same author further supposes that they derived their origin, for the most part, from Provence; one of the chief sources, no less of the poetical than of the prosaic fictions of Italy. Nor is it improbable that they were first introduced along with the songs of the Troubadours, whose language was so frequently adopted by the earliest poets of Italy; and were thus, together with their style of narrative, first naturalized, and then so admirably improved upon by the genius of Boccaccio.

Not a few of the stories in the Decameron may in this way be traced to the Provençal, and others to the romance of the "Seven Wise Men," entitled "DOLOPATHOS," written in Latin by the monk Giovanni, of the monastery of Altaselva.

That Italy is indebted for her "Novelle Antiche" to foreign sources, would further appear, from many of the stories being founded on incidents drawn from the romance of the ROUND TABLE, a beautiful copy of which was known to be in possession of Brunetto Latini, the master of Dante, a great admirer of its marvellous adventures, and probably the author of

those pieces we find taken from the materials of that romance. Such are the novels of the "Lady of Scallot," and of the "Good King Meliadus," which with a few others of the same exotic character, among the best, says Mr. Dunlop, in the whole collection, we have ventured to give, as the most favourable specimens the work would afford. But it is rather with regard to their merits in exhibiting the progress of language and of manners, together with several curious historical facts, than from any intrinsic excellence they may be said to possess, that they are at all deserving of notice. And even this remark will chiefly apply to the work, in its original language, of which the ancient edition, the earliest work known in the *lingua volgare*, and from which the subsequent editions have been taken, has been included among the *testi di lingua* of Italy. The most correct of these the Italians owe to the labours of Borghini and Vettori, although the edition published under the auspices of Cardinal Bembo, by Gualteruzzi at Bologna, has been always held in the highest repute. Besides that of the Giunti, there is a still more recent one, edited by Ferraio, and bearing the date of Milan, 1804.

Among the supposed authors of these elements of Italian fiction, may be enumerated the names of

Dante da Majano, Brunetto Latini, Francesco da Barberino, with those of several other poets and scholars who flourished during the same period, fragments of whose works remain, but whose names have perished. Many of the tales were added, in order to complete the cento, long after those contained in the MSS. or in the old edition made their appearance. These, however, are referred to the period in which they were written, so as not to interrupt the chronological view of the subject, preserved throughout the entire work. It is for this reason, indeed, that the following specimens from the *Novelle Antiche* have been inserted; certainly not from any peculiar merit they can boast.

NOVELLE ANTICHE.

NOVELLA II.

HOW A LEARNED GREEK, WHOM A KING HELD IN PRISON,
PASSED HIS JUDGMENT ON A HORSE.

IN a certain part of Greece there lived a king of great sway, of the name of Philip. This king, for some alleged crime or other, had imprisoned a Greek, a man of great learning, whose wisdom mounted to the skies. It happened one day that this monarch received from the king of Spain a present of a noble horse, of great size, and of a beautiful form. The king sent for his farrier to learn his opinion of the horse, but he was told that he had better apply to the learned Greek, who was reputed a man of universal knowledge. He therefore ordered the horse to be led into the field, and then commanded the Greek to be brought from his prison, and addressing him, said: "Master, let me have your opinion of this horse, for I have heard a great report of your wisdom." The Greek inspected the horse, and replied: "Sire, this horse is indeed a

beautiful courser, but in my opinion he has been nurtured on ass's milk." The king sent to Spain to inquire how the horse had been brought up, and found that the dam had died, and that the foal, as the Greek had asserted, had been reared on ass's milk. This circumstance astonished the king not a little, and as a reward, he ordered half a loaf of bread a day to be given to the Greek at the expense of the court. It fell out on another occasion, that as the king was inspecting his jewels, he sent again for the Greek, and said to him: "Master mine, your knowledge is great, and it seems that you know all things. Tell me, I pray you, whether or not you understand the virtue of these stones, and which of them seems to you the most valuable." The Greek replied: "Sire, which of them do you yourself consider as the most precious one?" The king then took up one of the most beautiful amongst them and said: "This one, Master, seems to me the most beautiful, and one of the highest value." The Greek examined it, and straining it closely in the palm of his hand, and placing it to his ear, said: "This stone, Sire, appears to me to have a living worm in it." The king sent for his lapidary, and ordered him to break the stone, and to their surprise the animal was found within. The King now looked upon the

Greek as a man of surprising wisdom, and ordered a whole loaf of bread to be given him daily at the expense of the court. It happened not many days after this, that the king, entertaining some suspicions of his own legitimacy, again sent for the Greek, and taking him into his closet, said: "Master, I hold you for a man of great penetration, which indeed has been manifested in your answers to the questions I have proposed to you. I wish you now to inform me whose son I am? The Greek then replied: "Sire, how strange a request! You well know that you are the son of your honoured predecessor." But the king dissatisfied, said: "Do not evade my question, but tell me the truth implicitly; for if you hesitate, you shall instantly die the death of a traitor." "Then, Sire," answered the Greek, "I must inform you that you are the son of a baker." Upon this, the king being anxious to know the real truth, sent for the queen-mother, and by threats compelled her to confess that the words of the Greek were true. The king then shut himself up in his chamber with the Greek, and said: "Master mine, I have received singular proofs of your wisdom, and I now entreat you to tell me how you have obtained a knowledge of these things." Then the Greek replied: "Sire, I will inform you. With respect to the horse, I

knew that he had been nourished with ass's milk from his hanging his ears, which is not natural to a horse. And that there was a live worm in the stone I knew from the fact, that stones are naturally cold, but this one I found to be warm, and it was therefore evident that the heat could only proceed from a living animal within." "And how," said the king, "did you discover that I was the son of a baker?" The Greek then replied: "Because when I told you of the wonderful circumstance of the horse, you ordered me a gift of half a loaf a day, and when I told you of the stone with the living worm in it, you ordered me a whole loaf. I then felt assured whose son you were; for if you had really been a king's son, you would have presented me with a city, as my merits deserved; whereas your origin then betrayed itself, and your natural disposition was satisfied in giving me a loaf, as your father the baker would have done." The king was then sensible of his own meanness, and immediately liberated the Greek from prison, and loaded him with gifts of value.

NOVELLA XIX.

REMARKABLE PROOF OF LIBERALITY AND COURTESY IN THE
KING OF ENGLAND.

KING JOHN of England was celebrated for his singular kindness and courtesy towards the poorer chevaliers of his court. It one day happened that during an entertainment, one of these gentlemen being in great distress, cast his eye upon a rich silver cover, thinking within himself: "If I could only obtain possession of that, my poor family would be rich indeed!"—The next moment he contrived to hide it under his vest, when one of the stewards, on removing the covers, finding it had disappeared, an order was issued that every guest on leaving the place should be examined. But the king, being the only one whose eye had caught the poor knight in the fact, took an opportunity of accosting him, saying, in a whisper: "Slip it under my coat, for I think they will hardly be bold enough to search me;"—an order with which the wretched chevalier immediately complied. When he had undergone his examination at the porter's gate, his sovereign sent a messenger after him, and on his entering trembling into the presence, presented him with the ut-

most courtesy, not only with the cover, but with the more massy portion of plate belonging to it.

On another occasion he shewed still greater courtesy to his poor chevaliers. They entered his chamber one evening with an intent to pillage, and having collected all the valuables they could lay their hands on, one of them, believing the king to be in a deep slumber, had the temerity to seize a rich embroidered counterpane over the king's couch, and beginning to pull it off, the king, without being perceived, held it fast. The others came to their comrade's assistance, and his majesty finding he had the worst of it, raised up his head a little, saying: "Nay, friends, this is no thieving; it is downright assault and battery! As for the rest, you do not steal them—I give them to you."

On hearing his majesty's voice, the ungrateful wretches fled, forgetting to take even the treasure already collected, which the king had given them.

When this prince's father was alive, he one day reproached his son John, saying: "Thou spendthrift, where dost thou keep thy treasures?" The prince replied: "With your leave, my liege, I can shew more than can your majesty still." Arguments upon this ensued, until at length both parties and their friends agreed to fix upon a certain day for the

exhibition of their respective wealth. Prince John invited all the young nobility, who were his friends, to attend on the day appointed at the rendezvous, where a magnificent tent was prepared, underlaid with rich carpets and cloths of gold, to receive the immense treasures of gold and silver and precious gems, in the possession of the king. The latter then, turning to the prince, cried out in a triumphant tone: "Now let us see your wealth, my son!" On which the prince, drawing his sword like lightning from its sheath, a thousand blades on every side instantly sprang from their scabbards; and his young friends all rushed forward in a moment, as if the very streets and squares were filled with them, and possessed themselves of the royal treasures, in the face of the king and his attendants.

It was now too late for his majesty to repair his error; for the young prince, turning to his noble followers, exclaimed: "Make the best of the booty you have won;" and in a short time the enchanting scene of wealth and splendor totally disappeared from view.*

* It is curious to observe the manner in which the unknown authors of the "*Novelle Antiche*," the rudiments of Italian prose fiction, have, in many instances, selected historical names and characters on which to ground their imaginary narratives, for the purpose of giving them a local truth and interest, doubt-

The king quickly assembled his forces to recover his lost treasures, while his son retired into a strong castle, with the valiant Bertrand de Born.* Here he was besieged by his father, and one day exposing his person, as usual, to every kind of danger, he was unfortunately shot through the head with an arrow, upon the walls.

On hearing this, the whole of his creditors throughout the kingdom assembled together, peti-

less with the same view as our "great unknown" of the present day. However destitute of intrinsic excellence or historical correctness, these stories will be found, in the original, extremely valuable, as conveying a just idea of the rise of Italian language and Italian fiction in an age preceding, it is supposed, that of Dante. The English reader may here require to be informed, that the old king is no other than Henry II.

* Beltramo, or Bertrand de Born, as well as his son, were, like King Richard, the Troubadours of their age. His "Rime" are still preserved in the Vatican library, and many of his pieces have been recently published by M. Raynouard, in his *Poésies des Troubadours*, vol. iv. Bertrand de Born was, in fact, alternately leagued with the rebellious sons of Henry II.; and after the death of Prince Henry, the son of that monarch, in 1183, was besieged in his little castle of Hauteford by the English king, and compelled to surrender. Henry, however, respected the friend of his deceased son, and restored Bertrand to the full enjoyment of his possessions. This incident is alluded to at the termination of the novel.

tioning payment of the various sums they had from time to time supplied; and they were admitted to an audience with the prince, just before his decease. To all the complaints that were preferred, the prince invariably replied: "I am sorry, my dear sir, you are come the day after the fair; but your money is spent. The truth is, I have given away all the fine things you supplied me with. My body is so very sick, that I am afraid it is no longer worth offering you, by way of pledge; but if my soul will be of any use to you, it is quite at your service. Suppose you send for an attorney forthwith, and let us see, gentlemen, what we can do." Insisting upon compliance, a notary was instantly sent for, whom the courteous prince addressed in the following words: "Write, Mr. Attorney, and write quickly, lest it should be too late,—I, Prince John, to wit of England, being sound in mind, but grievously sick in my body, do hereby will and bequeath my soul to perpetual purgatory, until all my creditors, of all sums, shall be paid and satisfied.'" Soon after uttering these words the obliging prince expired. The whole train of creditors then proceeded in a body with their petition to the king, who, instead of discharging the debts, flew into a violent passion with them, charging them with furnishing the prince with arms

to rebel against his royal father. He, moreover, condemned them, under pain of forfeiture of their goods and persons, to leave his dominions speedily. One of the creditors, being so deeply implicated that he believed nothing worse could happen to him, here came forwards, observing to the king: "But, sire, we shall not be losers in the end, inasmuch as we have got your poor son's soul in prison for his debts." "Ah, ah," replied the king, "you are cunning fellows; how have you managed that?" They then handed to his majesty a copy of the will, who, on perusing it, assumed another tone; and after having consulted his father confessor, as well as his chancellor of the exchequer, returned to his son's creditors, who were rejoiced to hear him say, that it was not the will of heaven that the soul of so brave a prince should remain in purgatory for his bills, which should be forthwith discharged. Immediately afterwards came Bertrand de Born, with his whole force, to submit to the pleasure of the king. "So!" cried his majesty, "I think you are the man who boasted you had more sense than all the world beside." "True, my liege," replied Bertrand, "but I have since lost it all." "When was that?" inquired his majesty. "Alas! my liege, when your noble son died, I lost all I had in the world." The

king perceiving that he spoke from the strong regard he bore the prince, not only pardoned, but gave him his liberty, and wherewithal to subsist in decent state.

NOVELLA XXIV.

THE LIBERAL MANNER IN WHICH THE SULTAN SALADIN
BESTOWED TWO THOUSAND MARKS; AND HOW HIS TREA-
SURER ENTERED IT IN HIS BOOKS.

THE Sultan Saladin was one of the noblest, the most valiant, and munificent princes that ever sat upon an eastern throne.* In one of his victorious battles, he took captive, together with many other noble prisoners, a French cavalier, who by his singular merits soon acquired the favour of the conqueror. While his companions remained in capti-

* The character here drawn of the great Saladin is similar to that given by Sozomeno, a writer of Pistoria, about the year 1194, where he says, *Saladinus Soldanus vir magnificus, strenuus, largus*. Many other great actions attributed to him, are commemorated by the same author, as may be gathered from an edition of his works published at Florence, besides the testimony of several contemporary writers quoted by Tiraboschi and Muratori. Saladin is said to have risen from the lowest origin; but his astonishing qualities raised him to the dignity of Sultan and king of Egypt. He triumphed over Guido, king of Jerusalem, whom he made prisoner, and possessed himself of his dominions. Dante, in the fourth canto of the *Inferno*, says,

“E solo in parte vidi il Saladino,”

distinguishing him as eminently soaring above the baseness of his birth and country.

vity, he was permitted to accompany the Sultan, nobly treated and apparelled, and consulted by him, as a friend, on many occasions. Such was his master's affection towards him, that observing him one day apparently depressed in mind, he tenderly inquired into the reason. On entering into the Sultan's presence, the captive knight had appeared very thoughtful, and on this question being put, shaking his head sorrowfully, he declined giving any answer. But Saladin becoming more urgent, and repeating that he must be made acquainted with the truth, the cavalier replied: "Noble Sultan, I was thinking of my country and my friends." "Then since you no longer wish to stay with me," returned the Sultan, "you are free; you shall go to your country and to your friends." The captive bowed his head, but could not utter a word. The monarch then called his treasurer into his presence, and bade him count two thousand marks in silver, and place it to his captive friend's account. The treasurer immediately wrote down the sum, but his pen blotting it, he entered three thousand marks instead of the former sum, and handed it to the Sultan. "How, what have you done?" cried the latter. "I blotted the first entry," was the reply, "and I wished to mend it." "If that be the case," said the Sultan, "do not

cancel any thing I say, but write down four thousand ; strange indeed if your pen should exceed the reach of mine !”

On another occasion the great Saladin, in the career of victory, proclaimed a truce between the Christian armies and his own. During this interval he visited the camp and the cities belonging to his enemies, with the design, should he approve of the customs and manners of the people, of embracing the Christian faith. He observed their tables spread with the finest damask coverings ready-prepared for the feast, and he praised their magnificence. On entering the tents of the king of France during a festival, he was much pleased with the order and ceremony with which every thing was conducted, and the courteous manner in which he feasted his nobles ; but when he approached the residence of the poorer class, and perceived them devouring their miserable pittance upon the ground, he blamed the want of gratitude which permitted so many faithful followers of their chief, to fare so much worse than the rest of their Christian brethren.

Afterwards, several of the Christian leaders returned with the Sultan to observe the manners of the Saracens. They appeared much shocked on seeing all ranks of people take their meals stiring

upon the ground. The Sultan led them into a grand pavilion where he feasted his court, surrounded with the most beautiful tapestries, and rich foot cloths, on which were wrought large embroidered figures of the cross. The Christian chiefs trampled them under their feet with the utmost indifference, and even rubbed their boots, and spat upon them.

On perceiving this, the Sultan turned towards them in the greatest anger, exclaiming: "And do you who pretend to preach the cross, treat it thus ignominiously?" Gentlemen, I am shocked at your conduct. Am I to suppose from this that the worship of your Deity consists only in words, not in actions? Neither your manners, nor your conduct, please me;" and on this he dismissed them, breaking off the truce and commencing hostilities more warmly than before.

* This practice of preaching the cross, and everywhere exposing it to the insults of the people, so humorously touched upon by the Sultan, has been likewise seriously treated of by a Tuscan pen, not many years ago.

NOVELLA XXX.

ANECDOTE OF A CERTAIN TALE-TELLER IN THE SERVICE OF
MESSER AZZOLINO.*

MESSER AZZOLINO was in the habit of listening to one of his *Novellatori*, or story-tellers, previous to going to rest. It happened that one evening the *Novellatore*, as well as his master, felt a great inclination to go to sleep, just as he was commanded to furnish one of his best stories. For want of a better, the weary fabulist began to relate the adventures of

* The Messer Azzolino here alluded to, is not the same who in those times was made Podestà of Arezzo, under the name of Azzolino d'Arringario degli Azzi d'Arezzo, in the year 1270; it is the tyrant Ezzelino da Romano, or d'Arezzo, as he is variously denominated by the seignories which belonged to him, and who made himself so terrible both to friends and foes by his revolting and sanguinary actions. Yet we are to suppose, that in the intervals of his ferocious exploits, when satiated with cruelty and revenge, he could still indulge himself in the more soothing pastime of listening to the adventures related by the wandering jongleurs and troubadours, or those of his sleepy jester. This story is taken from the eleventh tale of Petrus Alphonsus, and is introduced in Don Quixote, as being related by Sancho to his master. (Part I. b. iii. c. 6.) Dunlop's *History of Fiction*, vol. ii. p. 217.

a certain grazier, who went to market with the whole of his earnings, about two hundred pieces, for the purpose of purchasing sheep, obtaining at least two for a single piece. Returning with his stock in the evening to his farm, he found the river he had crossed so swollen with the rains, that he was greatly puzzled in what way to get them across it. In this dilemma he observed not far off a poor fisherman with a little boat, so small that it would only carry one sheep and the grazier at a passage. So he jumped in with a single fleece, and began to row with all his might. The river was broad, but he rowed and he rowed away . . . Here the fabulist came to a full stop and nodded. "Well, and what then?" cried his master; "Get on, Sirrah; what next?" "Why," replied the drowsy story-teller, "let him get over the remainder of the sheep, and then I will proceed; for it will take him a year at least, and in the mean time your excellency may enjoy a very comfortable slumber." And again he nodded his head.

NOVELLA XXXI.

CONCERNING THE VALIANT DEEDS OF RICCAR LOGHERICO
DEL ILLA.

RICCAR LOGHERICO, the lord of Illa, was one of the richest gentlemen in Provence, and a man of singular intrepidity and prowess in every feat of arms. When the Saracens made a descent upon Spain, he was present at that terrible engagement, which from its sanguinary nature, and its grand results, is known under the name of *la Spagnata*,* unequalled, it is supposed, in ferocity, by any battle fought since the time of the Greeks and Trojans. The Moors bore down upon their enemies with an overwhelming force, amidst the clang of warlike instruments, and bands of troops of various nations. Riccar Logherico was the leader of the van of the Christian army, and when he found his squadrons recoil in their charge, owing to the terrific music of the Moorish bands, he commanded his cavaliers to turn their horses' cruppers round towards the enemy, and to back them until they came close enough to make a

* *La Spagnata*, or the Spanish fight, a name given it by the people in commemoration of the feats of arms performed there.

cruel charge. When they found themselves approaching into the midst of the hostile squadrons, they suddenly wheeled about, and facing them, furiously dashed into the thickest of the battle, dealing their blows on all sides, until the Moors were completely put to the rout.

On another occasion, when the Count of Toulouse was arrayed in battle against the Count of Proenza, as they approached to action, the valiant Riccar was observed to give his steed to his squire, and to mount a strong mule. The Count inquired into the reason, saying, "What now, good Riccar, what are you about?" "I merely wish to show, my Lord; that I come here neither to pursue nor to fly. I will kill no man behind his back, nor flee from any man's face. That flighty beast will run away, but my mule will stand his ground." And herein he evinced his noble nature no less than his great prowess, in which he surpassed every other cavalier of his age.

NOVELLA XLIV.

THE NOVEL WAY IN WHICH A CAVALIER RECOMMENDED
HIMSELF TO THE LADY HE ADMIRER.*

A CERTAIN knight was one day entreating a lady whom he loved to smile upon his wishes, and among other delicate arguments which he pressed upon her, was that of his own superior wealth, elegance, and accomplishments, especially when compared with the merits of her own liege lord, "whose extreme ugliness, madam," he continued, "I think I need not insist upon." Her husband, who overheard this compliment from the place of his concealment, immediately replied, "Pray, sir, mend your own manners, and do not vilify other people." The name of the plain gentleman was Sicio di Val buona, and Messer Rinieri da Calvoli that of the other.

* The suitor here mentioned was Messer Rinieri da Calvoli, of whom the greatest of Italy's poets makes mention in the fourteenth canto of his *Purgatorio*:

Questi è Rinier, questi è 'l pregio, e l'onore
Della Casa da Calboli, ove nullo
Fatto s'è reda poi del suo valore.

NOVELLA XLIX.

CONCERNING AN ALARM-BELL INSTITUTED IN THE TIME OF
KING GIOVANNI.

IN the reign of King Giovanni d'Atri, there was ordered to be erected a certain great bell for the especial use of individuals, who might happen to meet with any grievous injuries, when they were to ring as loud as they could, for the purpose of obtaining redress. Now it so fell out, that the rope in the course of time was nearly worn away, on which a bunch of snakeweed had been fastened to it, for the convenience of the ringers. One day a fine old courser belonging to a knight of Atri, which being no longer serviceable, had been turned out to run at large, was wandering near the place. Being hard pressed by famine, the poor steed seized hold of the snakeweed with his mouth, and sounded the bell pretty smartly. The council, on hearing the clamour, immediately assembled, as if to hear the petition of the horse, whose appearance seemed to declare that he required justice. Taking the case into consideration, it was soon decreed that the same cavalier whom the horse had so long served while he was young, should be compelled to maintain him

in his old age ; and the king even imposed a fine in similar instances to the same effect.*

* The Cav. Saba da Castiglione mentions a like incident ; and an account of it is also contained in a pleasing little Italian work, whose antiquity deprives us of the name of the author ; in which it is stated that the bell was placed in the middle of a church in Atri, a noble city of Abruzzo, where the steed sought shelter, and from the same motive began to sound the bell. In addition to this instance of gratitude on the part of the council of Atri, other and real proofs are not wanting in various cities of Italy, of the high esteem in which true knights have held the virtues of their chargers. There are three bronze figures with public inscriptions, in Florence. A mule is commemorated by Luca Pitti, for his obstinate good qualities, in the Court of the Palazzo de' Pitti ; and the statue of a horse, which belonged to the Venetian ambassador, Carlo Cappello, is raised near the Piazza, on the side of the river Arno, by the menage of San Marco.

NOVELLA LVI.

SOME ACCOUNT OF A GENTLEMAN, WHOM THE EMPEROR
CAUSED TO BE HANGED.

THE emperor Frederic had one day occasion to order the execution of a certain gentleman for some heinous offence. In order the better to preserve the ends of justice, he selected an officer of great authority to keep watch over the body of the culprit, exposed for the sake of example, lest by his friends it should be carried away. These being actually on the watch, and the officer remiss in his duty, so it turned out to be the case. When he found the body was missing, he began to be afraid, lest, in his sovereign's anger, who had imposed the heaviest penalty on such a fault, he might be compelled to occupy the lost man's place. In this dilemma he resolved, after much consideration, to apply at a neighbouring abbey, desirous, if possible, of obtaining another dead body in the place of that he had lost. Arriving during the same night at the wished-for spot, he perceived before he entered, a certain lady* weeping

* The same lady tearing her hair and beating her breast, yet so easily consoled for the loss of her husband, is likewise to be

bitterly, with her hair flying all abroad, lamenting the death of her dear husband who had died only that day. This was just what the unlucky knight wanted, and he straightway accosted her in the most polite terms, inquiring what was the matter? The lady on this replied: "Alas! I loved him so tenderly! No, I shall never be reconciled to my loss; I will weep and no one shall comfort me." "Why," returned the cavalier, "what strange, what absurd conduct is this? You may die of grief, my poor lady, but will your husband return again to life the sooner, think you, for that? He hears not, he cares not for you; and will a woman of sense, like you, continue thus foolishly to bewail what cannot be helped? I will tell you what you had far better do: take me for your husband in his place, and let me put him in the place of somebody else I have lost. I have no wife, and besides I am in extreme danger,

found in Lorenzo Astemio di Macerata, *Hecatomythum, De vidua, quæ operarium suum sibi conjugio copulavit*. One would almost imagine, that with a change of the name and period, it had been taken from a fable of the ancient *Æsop*, could we suppose him to have been accessible to the author at that period. Mr. Dunlop observes that this story, the same as that of the Widow of Ephesus, originally written by Petronius Arbiter, probably came to the author of the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, through the medium of the *Seven Wise Masters*.—*History of Fiction*, vol. ii. p. 219.

and cannot tell what to do. I was set to watch over the body of an unfortunate gentleman just hanged, yet who has some way escaped out of my hands ; no thanks to his relations ! and I suppose I shall be fixed upon to supply his place. In the name of heaven, Madam, let us prevent this, and I will become the kindest and most indulgent husband to you in the world." At these words the lady suddenly became enamoured of the good knight, saying in a submissive tone : " Indeed I will do any thing you command me, and I am far from being insensible to the love you bear me. Come, let us remove the body of my poor dear husband to the place you wish ; he is buried just by, and we can put him in the stead of the gentleman you have just lost." She then dried her tears, and assisted her intended spouse to bring the body from the grave, and suspend it by the neck in the very same way the real culprit had been executed. " But he had two teeth," cried the cavalier, " wanting in his upper jaw, and I know the body will be inspected narrowly ; oh ! what shall I do ?" " Do you think," cried the lady in the softest tone, " we could not break two of his teeth ?" and two of his teeth were speedily knocked out ; and so pleased was she with the appearance of her knight, that she would have slit the ears of the old

gentleman likewise, had he requested her. Now, observing the manner in which she treated her husbands when she had done with them, the officer began seriously to reflect on the propriety of fulfilling the conditions, saying: "Madam, if you really think so little of the person whom you profess to love so much, what would you do with me in the like case?" And he left her overwhelmed with rage and vexation.

NOVELLA LVII.

WE ARE HERE INFORMED HOW CHARLES OF ANJOU LOVED
FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE.*

CHARLES the celebrated king of Sicily, when he was formerly Count of Anjou, had the unhappiness to be deeply smitten with the beauty of the Contessa di Zeti, who on her part was as passionately enamoured of the Conte d'Universa. It happened that about the same period the king of France had forbidden, under penalty both of goods and person, the practice of tourney tilting throughout all his dominions:

* Charles, the brother of king Louis XI. of France, was in love with the Countess of Anjou, but then of Zeti, being himself at that time Count of Anjou. In the year 1263, Pope Urban IV. proclaimed him king of Sicily and Puglia, anterior to the period, here stated, of his chivalric attachment. For when he obtained the crown of Sicily, in 1265, he had already been united to the daughter of Count Berlinghieri of Provence. His father, St. Louis, had strictly prohibited the celebration of tournaments throughout his dominions, so that he was compelled thus artfully to extort from the Saint permission to engage in a single tourney. We have mention of the redoubted person of M. Alardo in a line of Dante, which is as follows:

Ove senz' arme vinse il vecchio Alardo.

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Now the Count of Anjou being very desirous of proving whether he or the Conte d'Universa were the better knight, had recourse to the assistance of his friend Messer Alardo di Valleri, beseeching him with many intreaties, to apply for leave, from the king, to hold a single tourney, as he was determined to enter the lists against the Conte d'Universa, at all hazards.

His friend Alardo then inquired, in what way he thought he should proceed to obtain permission; and the Count directed him in the following words: "You know the king is now grown very devout, and such is his regard for you that not long since he was very nearly going into holy orders, and making you go too, for the sole pleasure of having your company. So say nothing about me; but ask it as a particular favour to yourself, that he will just let you break a spear or two before you die, and in every thing else you will always be at his majesty's commands."—"But," said Messer Alardo, "do not you think, Count, I shall be banished out of our chivalric company, drummed out of the regiment, and all for a single tourney?"—"Trouble not your head about that," replied the Count, "I give you the word of a true knight that you shall run no risks." The knight then promised to proceed with the affair

as directed, and walked out boldly to seek the king. "My good liege," said M. Alardo, as he entered the king's presence, "when I embraced the cause of arms, the day you were crowned, I think some of the best knights that ever mounted steeds were present. Now as I intend out of compliance to your wishes to retire shortly from the world, and assume the priest's cowl for a helm-piece, I have to entreat that your majesty will indulge me in one of my last worldly wishes, which is, to proclaim a little tournament, that I may once more try my mettle among the gay cavaliers here, and thus yield up my sword with decency where I first unsheathed it, amidst the pomp and revelry of your court." The king granted the knight's request with the utmost courtesy, and a grand tournament was accordingly proclaimed.

On one side gathered the followers of the Conte d'Universa, on the other those belonging to Anjou. The queen, with the chief beauties of the court, in all the glow of youth and pleasure, were present at the scene. The lodges, the balustrades, and the whole surrounding field seemed animated with joy and love, while the air rang with music, as the ladies, led by the Contessa di Zeti, took their seats. When a number of spears had been already broken, the two Counts of Anjou and Universa cast their eyes upon each other,

and unable to restrain their rivalry, ordered the ground to be staked out, and their heralds to sound a charge. At the same moment they sprang forward to the shock, with the full force of their fiery steeds, their lances levelled at each other's breasts. Just as he had reached the middle of the ring, the charger of the Conte d'Universa fell with him, and both came together to the ground. Many of the nearest ladies, and among them the Contessa di Zeti, hastily left their lodge, and courteously assisted the Count to rise, the latter giving him her arm, and conducting him kindly to a seat.

On observing this, the Count d'Anjou began to complain bitterly that he had not had the same good fortune, exclaiming: "Alas! my noble steed, why didst thou not fall headlong like that clumsy beast, and bring the sweet countess to my side, walking, alas, as she now walks there with him!"

After the tournament was concluded, the Count d'Anjou went to the queen, and begged, as an especial favour, that she would consent to wear the semblance of being piqued with her royal lord, and that afterwards, making the reconciliation of love, she would insist on his first consenting to grant her one thing, which was to be, that he would not deprive the young cavaliers of France of the glorious

society of their famed friend, Messer Alardo di Valleri.

The queen very graciously did exactly as she was requested ; for she picked a quarrel with his majesty, and on making it up again, required the above mentioned terms. These the king also promised her ; and M. Alardo was thus released from his promise of becoming a saint, long remaining a member of the chivalric brotherhood of the kingdom, celebrated for his wonderful prowess even among the chief nobles, and no less esteemed for his singular virtues than for his courage.

NOVELLA LX.

THE GOOD KING MELIADUS AND THE KNIGHT WITHOUT FEAR.

THE good king Meliadus, and the knight without fear, were mortal enemies to each other in the field. The cavalier being upon one of his secret undertakings, happened to meet with some of his own squires, who, unable to recognise him, though they had the utmost regard for their master, thus accosted him: "Now, Sir knight, tell us, on the faith of your chivalry, whether is the Knight without Fear, or the good king Meliadus, the better sword?"—"Why, squires," replied the cavalier, "so may Heaven grant me fair adventure, the good king, I think, is the best knight that ever pressed a steed."

His squires who bore the king Meliadus no good will, out of the love they felt for their own lord, expressing at all times their abhorrence of the king, now fell unawares upon their master, and traitorously making him their prisoner, placed him armed as he was, across the back of a poor palfrey, saying among each other, that they would take him and have him hanged.

As they went along their way, however, they fell

in with the king Meliadus, who was also proceeding, in the disguise of a wandering knight, to a certain tournament, in full equipment for the joust. As he passed, he thus addressed the squires: "And why do you wish to hang this cavalier, gentlemen? who is he that you should use him thus vilely?" To this they replied: "Because he has well deserved to die, and if you knew why as well as we, you would execute him at once. Convict him of his own fault out of his own mouth, if you please!" The king then approached the captive knight, saying: "What have you been guilty of, that these fellows should treat you thus ignominiously?"—"I have done nothing," replied the cavalier, "nothing but telling them the simple truth."—"How?" exclaimed the king, "that is hardly possible! Let me hear what you have really done?"—"Most willingly, Sir," replied the captive; "I was proceeding on my way, in the guise of a simple knight errant, when I met with these squires, who enquired of me, on the faith of chivalry, whether the good king Meliadus, or the Cavalier without Fear, were the better knight? Always desirous that the truth should prevail, I declared that the king Meliadus was the best; in which I meant to speak the truth, although the same king is one of the bitterest enemies I have in the

field. I bear him the deepest hatred and defiance, and yet I spoke the truth. This is the whole of my offence, and for this I am punished as you see." The king Meliadus directly fell upon the squires, and quickly dispersing them, unbound the captive cavalier, mounting him upon a rich charger, and presenting him with his coat of arms, which were, however, concealed, entreating him not to behold them until he had reached his destination. They then each went their several way, as well as the squires. The cavalier, when he dismounted at his quarters, raised the covering of his saddle and found the arms of king Meliadus, who had thus rescued him from his own squires, although his mortal enemy.

NOVELLA LXXII.

THE SULTAN, BEING IN WANT OF MONEY, ENDEAVOURS TO
FIND MEANS OF EXTORTING IT FROM A JEW.*

THE sultan, finding himself at a loss for money, was persuaded by some of his courtiers to seek occasion of quarrelling with a rich jew, who had amassed considerable wealth in his dominions. The Israelite was immediately summoned to appear before him, when the sultan insisted upon his informing him, which he believed to be the best creed in the world, flattering himself that if he should prefer that of Moses, he might inflict upon him a heavy fine; and if he should declare for Mahomet's, he would accuse him of professing the Jewish as he was known to do. But the wary Israelite replied to the question in the following manner: "You must know, great Sultan, there was once a father who had three sons, each of whom had frequently entreated him to bestow upon him a large diamond ring which

* We find the same story improved upon by the elegant Boccaccio himself, (*vide* *Giorno i. Nov. iii. p. 73*). Nor is this, by any means, a solitary instance, in which he has drawn his subjects from these rude specimens of early Italian fiction.

he possessed, set round with other precious gems ; and each was so very pressing, that, desirous of obliging them all three, the father sent for a goldsmith to attend him without loss of time. ‘ Do you think,’ said the father, ‘ you could make me two rings exactly resembling this in appearance?’ which the goldsmith promised, and equally well performed. No one being acquainted with his intentions, he sent severally for each of the youths, presenting him, under promise of keeping it secret, with one of the rings, which each of them esteemed the real diamond, and no one knew the truth except the father himself. And thus do I confess, great Sultan, that neither do I pretend to know it, being unable to throw the least light upon a secret, which is known only to the Father of all.” The sultan, on receiving this unexpected answer, had nothing further to urge, and was compelled, for want of a reason to the contrary, to let the jew go where he pleased.

NOVELLA LXXV.*

AN ACCOUNT OF THE GREAT SLAUGHTER MADE BY KING
RICHARD IN BATTLE AGAINST THE SARACENS.

THE good king Richard, surnamed Lion-heart, set out on an expedition over seas with a vast train of barons, the most doughty knights and cavaliers of every rank, all taking ship for the Holy Land, and all consisting of foot. When in the presence of the

* Though there is, perhaps, little historical authority for the incident here reported to have taken place between the lion-hearted Richard and his foe, it is by no means an improbable one. For though Sir Walter Scott has been polite enough to present his majesty with a coal-black steed in *Ivanhoe*, it is generally known, that the British Lion was accustomed to engage his enemies on his feet; and why should not the sultan, as well as Sir Walter, present him with a horse? We subjoin the following portion of the canzone, in which the hero laments his captivity in Germany.

Or sachan ben mos homs, e mos barons
Angles, Normans, Peytasins, e Gascons,
Qu' yeu non ay ia si païre compaignon
Que per aver lou laïssesse en prison.

Yet know full well, my chiefs of every land,
Proud English, Normans, Gascons, Poitiers' band,
I would not leave the poorest of their train
To linger thus his prison-hours in pain.

The whole of the original, with a translation, may be seen in Burney's *History of Music*, vol. ii. p. 238.

sultan's army, king Richard, leading on his men, soon made such dreadful havoc among the Saracens, that the nurses used to say to the infants, when they chid them, "Be quiet, or king Richard will hear you:" for he was as dreadful in their eyes as death itself. It is said that the sultan, on seeing the rout of his finest troops, cried out, "How many are those Christians who thus deal with my people?" And when he was told that there were only king Richard with his English axemen and archers, and the whole on foot, he added, "It is a scandal to our prophet, that so brave a man as king Richard should be seen to fight on foot; bear him my noblest charger." And a steed was instantly after the battle despatched to the king's tent, with a message from the sultan, that he trusted he should no longer behold him fight on foot. Casting his eye upon the horse, Richard commanded one of his squires to mount him, to observe his paces. The squire found him very hard in the mouth, and in a short time, losing his command over him, he was borne full speed into the sultan's camp, who came forward expecting to greet king Richard. The king very wisely, by this contrivance, escaped: and shewed how imprudent it always is to confide in the good offices of an enemy.

NOVELLA LXXXI.

WE HERE LEARN HOW THE LADY OF SCALOT DIED FOR
LOVE OF LAUNCELOT OF THE LAKE.

A DAUGHTER of the great Barbassoro, became passionately attached to Launcelot of the Lake; but so far from returning her love, he bestowed all his affections on the fair Queen Ginevra. To such a degree did her unhappy attachment arise, that she at length fell a victim to it, and died, leaving a bequest, that as soon as her soul had departed, her body should be transported on board a barge fitted up for the purpose, with a rich couch, and adorned with velvet stuffs, and precious stones and ornaments; and thus arrayed in her proudest attire, with a bright golden crown upon her brows, she was to be borne alone to the place of residence of her beloved. Beneath her silver zone was found a letter to the following tenor; but we must first mention what ought to precede the letter itself. Every thing was exactly fulfilled as she had appointed, respecting the vessel without a sail or oars, helmsman, or hands to guide her; and so, with its lifeless freight, it was launched upon the open waves. Thus she was borne along by the winds, which con-

veyed her direct to Camalot, where the barge rested of itself upon the banks.

A rumour immediately spread through the court, and a vast train of barons and cavaliers ran out of the palace, followed soon by King Arthur himself. They stood mute with astonishment, on observing the strange vessel there, without a voice or a hand to stir her out of the dead calm in which she lay. The king was the first to set his foot upon her side, and he there beheld the gentle lady surrounded with the pomp of death. He too first unclasped the zone, and cast his eye over the letter, directed — “To all the Knights of the Round Table, greeting, from the poor lady of Scalot, who invokes long health and fortune for the proudest lances in the world. Do they wish to learn, how I am thus fearfully brought before them? let my last hand witness that it was, at once, for the sake of the noblest and vilest of the cavaliers of the land—for the proud Knight, Launcelot of the Lake. For neither tears nor sighs of mine availed with him, to have compassion on my love. And thus, alas, you behold me dead,—fallen a victim only for loving too true.”

NOVELLA LXXXII.

HOW A CERTAIN HERMIT, ON HIS WAY THROUGH A FOREST,
FOUND A GREAT TREASURE, AND WHAT ENSUED.

A GENTLE hermit one day proceeding on his way through a vast forest, chanced to discover a large cave, nearly hidden under ground. Being greatly fatigued, he entered to repose himself awhile, and observing something shine brightly in the distance, he approached, and found it was a heap of gold. At the sight of the glittering bait, he turned away, and hastening through the forest again, as fast as possible, he had the further misfortune to fall into the hands of three fierce robbers, always on the watch to despoil the unwary travellers who might pass that way. But, though inmates of the forest, they had never yet discovered the treasure from which the hermit now fled. The thieves on first perceiving him thus strangely flying, without any one in pursuit, were seized with a sort of unaccountable dread, though, at the same time, they ventured forward to ascertain the cause. On approaching to inquire, the hermit, without relaxing his pace, answered, "I flee from death, who is urging me sorely behind." The robbers, unable to perceive any one, cried out,

"Shew us where he is, or take us to the place instantly." The hermit therefore replied, in a hurried voice, "Follow me then," and proceeded towards the grotto. He there pointed out to them the fatal place, beseeching them, at the same time, to abstain from even looking at it, as they had far better do as he had done, and avoid it. But the thieves, resolving to know what strange thing it was which had alarmed him, only bade him lead the way: which, being in terror of his life, the hermit quickly did; and shewing them the heap of gold, "Here," he said, "is the death which was in pursuit of me;" and the thieves, suddenly seizing upon the treasure, began to rejoice exceedingly.

They afterwards permitted the good man to proceed upon his way, amusing themselves when he was gone with ridiculing his absurd conduct. The three robbers guarding the gold in their possession, began to consider in what way they should employ it. One of them observed, "Since heaven has bestowed such good fortune upon us, we ought by no means to leave the place for a moment without bearing the whole of it along with us." "No," replied another, "it appears to me we had better not do so; but let one of us take a small portion, and set out to buy wine and viands at the city, besides many other

things he may think we are in want of;" and to this the other two consented.

Now the great demon, who is very ingenious and busy on these occasions to effect as much mischief as possible, directly began to deal with the one fixed upon to furnish provisions from the city. "As soon," whispered the devil to him, "as I shall have reached the city, I will eat and drink of the best of every thing, as much as I please, and then purchase what I want. Afterwards I will mix with the food I intend for my companions something which I trust will settle their account; thus becoming sole master of the whole of the treasure, which will make me one of the richest men in this part of the world:" and as he purposed to do, so he did.

He carried the poisoned food to his companions, who on their part, while he had been away, had come to the conclusion of killing him on his return, in order that they might divide the booty between themselves, saying, "Let us fall upon him the moment he comes, and afterwards eat what he has brought, and divide the money between us in much larger shares than before." The robber who had been at the city now returned with the articles he had bought, when the other two instantly pierced his body with their lances, and despatched him with

their knives. They then began to feast upon the provisions prepared for them, and upon satiating their appetite, both soon after were seized with violent pangs, and fell dead upon the ground. In this manner all three fell victims to each other's avarice and cruelty, without obtaining their ill-gotten wealth; a striking proof of the judgment of Heaven upon traitors; for, attempting to compass the death of others, they justly incurred their own. The poor hermit thus wisely fled from the gold, which remained without a single claimant.

Fables of Boccaccio.

FROM THE DECAMERON.

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO.

THE voluminous notices contained in the writings of Villani, of Manni, and of Mazzuchelli, together with those prefixed to the various editions of the Decameron,* relating to the life of this distinguished Florentine, render it quite unnecessary to enter here into any very detailed view of the subject. So many extracts from these have, moreover, appeared in the English language, that it may be deemed sufficient to refer such readers as feel more particularly interested, to those more enlarged sources of information; not omitting to mention some judicious remarks from the pen of Mr. Dunlop.† A brief and rapid sketch of the chief incidents in the life of this *facile princeps* of Italian novelists, will be all that the translator now presumes to offer on the sub-

* *Historia del Decameron*, Florence, 4to. 1742.—Villani, *Lives of Illustrious Florentines*, 4to. Venice.—*Vita del Boccaccio*, by Squariciafico,—by Lodovico Dolce,—by Sansovino,—by Massone, Bayle, Betussi, &c. —Præfaces to the various editions of Florence, Venice, &c.

† Dunlop's *History of Fiction*, vol. ii. p. 222.

ject. And even in this, it has been his object wholly to confine himself to the more essential points connected with the character and productions of one of the great masters of the Tuscan language: one, who with the happy audacity of true genius, first ventured to adopt, and bring into repute the *lingua volgare* of his country.

Boccaccio was born at Florence, in the year 1313. His family was from Certaldo, a village in the Valdelsa, about twenty miles from Florence, a place from which his father derived his patronymic of da Certaldo. He was a reputable merchant, and early apprenticed his son Giovanni to the same business. Of his mother there is little known, beyond what we learn from the author's contemporary, Villani, to whom much credit is seldom due, who mentions her as a Parisian lady of middle rank, to whom Boccaccio's father became passionately attached, during one of his commercial visits to the French capital. It is generally agreed, however, that their son Giovanni was born without the pale of wedlock, a fact which further appears from a papal dispensation having been granted at Avignon, permitting our author, though illegitimate, to assume the ecclesiastical habit.

Of the early development of his genius in the

career in which it was destined to reach such unrivalled excellence, we have some account in the Novelist's own words :—" I well remember," he observes, " that before I was seven years of age, and when I had never seen or known what fictions were, nor had received any instructions from masters, I had already a natural turn for fiction, and produced some trifling tales."* One of Boccaccio's earliest preceptors was Giovanni Strada, from whom he acquired the elements of the Latin language. He was soon afterwards instructed by him, at the instance of his father, in a knowledge of arithmetic, preparatory to entering upon some commercial employment at Paris. With this view he set out for France; but quickly disgusted with a pursuit so little congenial to his inclinations, after spending some time in travelling from place to place, whence he gathered much of the local information and adventure exhibited in his works, he visited Naples, and at the tomb of Virgil is said to have first renounced the pursuit of commerce in favour of a more engaging intercourse with the muses.

After long and vain expostulations, he wrung from his father a reluctant consent; and this only

* Genealogy of the Gods, Book XV.

on condition of applying himself to the study of the canon law under Cino da Pistoja, in which, however, he made little progress, although he was afterwards supposed to have become versed in the different branches of legal knowledge. But he was yet young; and ardently devoting himself to the acquisition of philosophy and letters, to recover the time he conceived he had lost, he made rapid advances in every science he pursued.

In the course of his studies, he was fortunate enough to obtain the acquaintance of the celebrated Petrarch, who encouraged him to persevere, and became equally his friend and his preceptor; though it is difficult to say, to which of these great characters the literature of Italy and of all Europe is most deeply indebted. The value of the works which they produced, is still surpassed by those which they rescued from the oblivion of ages; and their letters upon so interesting a pursuit, are, perhaps, among the most curious and rare furnished by history.

In the science of mathematics, and of astrology, our author received the instructions of Andalò di Negro, a Genoese, together with those of Francesco da Barberino, who was likewise an advocate and a poet. His Greek preceptor was Leontius Pilatus, who had been expressly invited and accompanied by

Boccaccio himself, to take up his residence at Florence, where he became professor of the Grecian language.

At what period of his life he assumed the ecclesiastical dress does not appear; although it is ascertained, that in the year 1373, two years previous to his decease, he had entered into one of the monkish orders. Like his great predecessor, Dante, no less than his illustrious contemporary, the poet of *Vaucluse*, our author was frequently entrusted with embassies by the Florentine republic. Three of these were successively to the reigning pontiffs at Rome; the first to Pope Innocent VI., in 1354, and the two latter to Urban V., in the years 1365 and 1367. But, perhaps, the most remarkable was that with which he was invested by the Commune of Florence for the express purpose of inviting Petrarch to return and take up his residence in Florence, after the repeal of the ban of exile against his father. Another was undertaken into Germany, with the view of prevailing upon Lewis of Bavaria to make a descent into Italy, as we find recorded in the Florentine annals relating to that period.

But the chief objects which seemed to absorb nearly the whole of Boccaccio's existence, and were alternate rivals for his regard in almost an equal

degree, were a passionate devotion to literature, and to the society of his beautiful countrywomen. The freedom in which he is said, in this respect, to have indulged himself, has, likewise, by some been extended to his religious opinions; a charge, which, if we may be permitted to judge by inference from his writings, has certainly not been lightly advanced. In many of his tales there is as little of a devotional as of a moral cast. Yet we ought perhaps to thank our great novelist, that they are sufficiently voluminous to admit of such a selection, as may prove at once harmless and amusing; an object which throughout this work, has, as far as possible, been invariably kept in view.

In regard to the names of the ladies whom Boccaccio is supposed to have admired, there is much difference of opinion among his critics and biographers. But though their respective claims have never yet been satisfactorily adjusted, we have the attractions of some of them pretty minutely described, in different portions of our author's works. Drawn by the hand of a complete master in the descriptive art, many of these portraits of beauty are quite unrivalled in their way. But the poet has thrown a veil over them all, and who they really were, under their fictitious dress, is a question still open to the old

courts of love. Enumerated in the list are an Elena, a Lucia, and more particularly a Maria, said to have been a natural daughter of Robert King of Naples, of whom Boccaccio was extravagantly fond. This passion gave rise to several exquisite descriptions—pictures of perfect truth and nature—delineations of disappointed affection, expressed in a sweetness and fervor of language, which place the Fiammetta of Boccaccio beyond the reach of any of his numerous imitators. Though upon more doubtful authority, Giovanna, Queen of Naples, is said likewise to have attracted our author's regards. Be this, however, as it may, Boccaccio never married :

“ A worshipper at many a shrine,
He laid his heart on none,”

though it would appear that his attachments were not altogether poetical, inasmuch as we hear of a daughter of the name of Violante, whom, losing early in life, he frequently afterwards mentions under the name of Olimpia. Some time previous to his decease, he is said to have renounced his errors, expressing his regret no less for portions of his writings than of his life, influenced by the efforts of a Carthusian monk of the name of Pietro Petroni, whose repeated expostulations received by our au-

thor, through his friend Ciani, belonging to the same order, had at length their due effect.

The death of Boccaccio took place in 1375, in the sixty-second year of his age, owing, it is said, to a disorder of the stomach induced by excessive study. He was interred in the church of SS. Jacopo and Filippo at Certaldo, the birth-place and the sepulchre of his family.

Although the author of various compositions, as well in the Latin as in the Tuscan language, which he so beautifully modelled to his purpose, Boccaccio's reputation chiefly rests upon the *Decameron*, a work written in the maturity of his powers. It was composed soon after the year 1348, rendered remarkable by the great pestilence which desolated Florence. Of this he himself informs us, in his introductory discourse, which may be said to vie with the appalling descriptions handed down to us by Thucydides and Lucretius, of the same dreadful malady; such is the force and vividness of its coloring. At what period the work was brought to a conclusion does not appear, though as far as we can now learn, it was chiefly composed at Fiesole, delightfully situated near Florence, where he is believed to have passed much of his time. That the

author himself considered it in the light of a laborious undertaking, is clear from his repeated mention of it towards the conclusion, where he terms it, "una lunga fatica."

Perhaps the beauty and eloquence of the language of the Decameron, or Ten Days' Relation of Tales, are intitled to still higher praise than the invention or the interest of the stories it contains. In this view it stands unrivalled, and the respective merits of subsequent imitators are best estimated, in proportion as they approach the ease and elegance of their model. When this standard was once abandoned, the language fell into comparative barbarism, and it is with difficulty we recognize, in some of the novelists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the successors of the great Boccaccio.

In tracing the origin of many of the tales in the Decameron, some will be found to be of an historical, some of a fictitious, and others of a mixed character. A few are modelled on the "*Novelle Antiche*," and on materials still more remote, whose origin it is now impossible to ascertain. In general, those derived from the East, and from the French Fabliaux, may, perhaps, be pronounced the most ingenious and pleasing. But, however much indebted to the northern Trouveurs, Boccaccio and

his successors gathered little from the Troubadours of the south, to whom the poets of Italy owed so much of their reputation.

The series of novels, entitled, "Il Decamerone," has also frequently appeared under the name of "Il Principe Galeotto," derived, it is supposed, from a similar interesting production, thus entitled, whose attractions are celebrated by Dante, as having fostered the unhappy loves of Paulo and Francesca :

"Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse," &c.

In the Decameron, we possess the first collection of Italian Tales, following the "Cento Novelle Antiche," not later than half a century, though the progress during that time, in the taste and language of Italy, is truly astonishing : such at least as the genius of Boccaccio can alone account for. To convey an idea of this, it will be sufficient to remark upon the improvement which took place in our own language, between the intervening periods of Gower and Chaucer, and our early English dramatists : nor do we think that in such a comparison we are going much beyond the point.

In his use of the *lingua volgare*, indeed, Boccaccio would appear to have outstripped his age, and acquired, as if by intuition, the polished ease and freedom of an Augustan era ; after which, at no distant period

the language underwent a decline. From his talents, his knowledge of life, and the various scenes in which he had been engaged, from which many of his incidents are drawn, no one could have come better prepared for the accomplishment of the arduous task of becoming at once the framer of his fictions, and of the language in which they were written. Eastern, Grecian, Roman, and chivalric sources were alike resorted to, no less for purposes of fable, than for the language affording new terms of art. To these were likewise added the early historical materials of his own country. Still it is maintained by some, that the chief portion of the tales in the Decameron, are entirely of the author's own invention; and there are certainly many in which no traces of their origin can be discovered.

Doubtless, many are of this nature, in which we meet with real historical names; from which it has been argued by Manni and other Italian critics, that the incidents related are themselves true. This opinion is combated by the ingenious author of the *History of Fiction*,* so far supporting Boccaccio's claim to their pure invention; and we think he combats it with success. "Manni," says Mr. Dunlop, "appears to have thought, that if he could discover that

* Mr. Dunlop's *History of Fiction*, vol. ii. p. 224-5.

a merchant of a certain name existed at a certain period, the tale related concerning him, must have had a historical foundation." But though this would appear to have escaped the observation of the Italian editor of the *Decameron*, it is nevertheless probable that many incidents both of a private and historical character, which we meet with in the work, though no longer upon record, may really have occurred during the author's own times, however much they may have been modified by him to suit his purpose.

Among these, and not the least amusing of this character, are such as exhibit the immoralities and abuses of the clerical orders, with much of the spirit of our old English satirists, though under the finer veil of prose fiction, and with less bitter invective than we find in the *Vision of Pierce Plowman*, or indeed in any work from the times of Gower and Chaucer, to those of Withers and Donne.

The boldness of all these secular writers, at so early a period, is at first calculated to excite surprise; until we come to reflect, that however severe against the avowal of heretical opinions, it was one of the indulgences of the Holy Church to overlook and even to listen to the scurrility and abuse of its more witty children, as long as they took care to preserve, as was often the case with the most outra-

geous of these satirists, an outward conformity to its doctrines. And thus we perceive that Boccaccio himself entered into holy orders before he died; while many a truly religious heretic afterwards probably sealed his faith at the stake. It is the want of this consideration, which appears so frequently to perplex the critics and commentators on the lives of many of the early authors: but it is an apparent contradiction, easily in this way explained.

Such were the freedoms taken by the authors of the *Fabliaux*, of *Piers Plowman*, and, in particular, in many of Chaucer's tales, such as that of the *Sompnour*; and by Jean de Meun, where he introduces *Faux Semblant*, habited as a monk, in his *Roman de la Rose*.* In all these, the wandering friars are held up to the scorn and derision of the people. But in the hands of Boccaccio, we find this species of satire contained rather in the incidents and adventures of his heroes, than in his moral reflections: and it is often so finely and intimately inwrought with his descriptions, that we have to gather it rather from inference than from observation. The charm of his language is likewise so great, that it was sufficient to have disarmed the Pope and his satellites,

* Dunlop's *History of Fiction*, vol. ii. p. 228.

and his easy and graceful way of saying the harshest things, was calculated, with the power of the enchanted spear, at once to wound and to heal.

The simple and natural manner of his introductions is by no means the least triumph of Boccaccio's genius : that which in all other writers is esteemed the most difficult, induces his readers to pursue the subject, and to regret its close. His characters are always perfect of their sort, admirably in keeping, and fitted to the scenes in which they engage. There is also an airy and buoyant spirit about them truly refreshing; and this, even when contrasted with the scenes of misery and desolation around them, has something in it not unpleasing; nor is it improbable in the circumstances in which they are. The period chosen, the descriptions of the surrounding scenery, the manner in which they meet to relate their stories, which the ladies and their companions take in turn, are in the highest degree natural. The following selections will be found sufficient, it is hoped, to convey a pretty just idea of the varied powers possessed by our unequalled novelist,

" From grave to gay, from sprightly to severe ;"
in which pictures of rural beauty and repose are succeeded by the sombre and terrific scenes of jealousy, hatred; or revenge.

BOCCACCIO.

SECOND DAY, NOVELLA IV.

THE country bordering on the sea-coast, on the way from Reggio to Gaeta, has ever been esteemed the most delightful region of Italy, and that part of it near to Salerno, which looks direct upon the sea, and which the inhabitants call the coast of Malfi, is full of small towns, gardens, and fountains, and abounds in trade and merchandize. In one of these towns called Ravello, many rich men are still to be found, and not long since a very wealthy man dwelt there named Landolfo Ruffolo, who not being content with the riches he had acquired, but coveting to double them, was in danger of losing both his fortune and his life together. This man, after the custom of merchants, having made his calculations, purchased a large ship, and, lading her with an assortment of merchandize, sailed to the Isle of Cyprus. When however he arrived there with his cargo, he found a number of vessels, which had anticipated him with goods of the same description as his own;

in consequence of which, he was not only obliged to sell his cargo at a cheap rate, but almost to give it away, to his great loss and mortification. Whereupon grieving exceedingly, and not knowing what to do, seeing himself thus suddenly reduced from a state of affluence to low poverty, he resolved to die, or to indemnify himself for his losses on other people, rather than to return home a beggar, after having always maintained the rank of a wealthy man. Having found a purchaser for his own ship, he with the money arising from it, and from the proceeds of his merchandize, purchased a small swift sailing brigantine well calculated for a pirate vessel, which he fitted up with every thing requisite for a service of that nature. He now began to capture the vessels of other merchants, but particularly of the Turks, and fortune in this enterprise favored him more than she had done in his mercantile adventures. In the space of one year he had robbed and taken so much from the Turks, that he was not only indemnified for the loss of all his merchandize, but his wealth was wholly doubled. Finding his misfortunes thus liberally requited, and being now content, and thinking it would be folly to hazard this second fortune, he concluded on returning home, and resolved not to risk his money in the purchase

of any more merchandize, but to return in the same vessel in which he had repaired his losses. He accordingly ordered his men to put forth their oars with all expedition. When they were now in the mid ocean, a gale arose which was not only contrary to their course, but caused such a dreadful sea, that the small boat being unable to live in it, they made all haste to land, and in the expectation of a more friendly wind entered a little port in a small island, and there sheltered themselves. A little time after, two great carracks of Genoa, on their return from Constantinople, driven by the same storm, also sought a refuge in the same port. The people on board the latter seeing the owner's name, and hearing him to be very rich, blocked up her passage; and as men are naturally addicted to covet after money and spoil, they resolved to make her their own as a prize at sea. Landing therefore some of their men, well armed with crossbows and other weapons, they prevented any person issuing out of the vessel, and entering on board, took full possession of her, throwing all the men overboard, and sparing only Landolfo himself, whom they put on board one of the carracks, leaving him nothing but his clothes, and, having rifled the vessel of all her treasure, they sunk her in the sea.

On the day following, the storm having abated, the carracks again set sail, and had a prosperous voyage until evening, when the wind began to blow with more violence than before, and swelled the sea in such rude storms, that the two vessels were separated from each other. The carrack in which the wretched Landolfo lay, was by the fury of the tempest driven against a rock (beneath the isle of Cephalonia), and, like a glass against a wall, dashed into a thousand pieces, the goods and merchandize, chests, coffers, and beds, and other things, floating in the sea. But, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, and raging of the waves, the crew attempted to save their lives, some by swimming, and others by catching hold of such things as floated near them, amongst whom the miserable Landolfo, desirous to save his life if possible, espied a chest or coffer before him, ordained to be the means of saving him from drowning. Now, although the day before he had wished for death infinite times rather than to return home in such wretched poverty, yet, seeing how other men strove to save their lives, he took advantage of this favour offered him, and keeping fast hold of the coffer as well as he could, and being driven at will by the winds and waves, he supported himself till day appeared. He then looked all around

him, and saw nothing but clouds, the sea, the coffer, which one while slipped from under him, and at another time supported him, as the winds and waves drove it. All that day and the ensuing night, he floated on the water, drinking more than he wished, and nearly perishing for food. The next morning, by the will of providence, or the force of the winds, Landolfo, who was well nigh become a sponge, holding his arms strongly about the chest, as a man in fear of drowning snatches at the smallest succour, drew near unto the shore of the island of Corfu, where, by good fortune, a poor woman, but a notable housewife, was scouring her dishes with the salt water and sand. When she saw the chest drawing near her, and not being able to discover what it was, she grew fearful, and retiring from it, cried out aloud. Landolfo had not the power to speak to her, if he had seen her, being exhausted and almost senseless ; but even as the winds and waves pleased, the chest was driven still nearer to the land, and then the woman perceived that it had the form of a coffer, and looking more carefully, beheld two arms extended over it, and afterwards she perceived the face of a man, though she was not able to judge whether or not he were alive. Moved by charitable and womanly compassion, she stepped in among the

billows, and getting fast hold of Landolfo by the hair of his head, drew both the chest and him to land, and calling for her daughter to help her, with much difficulty she unfolded his arms from the chest, setting it upon her daughter's head, and then between them Landolfo was led into the town, and there conveyed into a warm room, where, by care, he soon recovered his strength, having been benumbed with extreme cold. After administering to him broth and wine, his senses became somewhat restored, and he saw where he was, but knew not in what manner he had been brought thither, until the good woman shewed him the coffer that had kept him floating on the waves, and, next to God, had been the means of saving his life. The chest seemed of such slender weight, that nothing of any value could be expected in it, either to recompense the woman's great pains and kindness bestowed on him, or for any matter of his own benefit. Nevertheless, the woman being absent, he opened the chest, and found innumerable precious stones therein, some costly and curious set in gold, and others not fixed in any metal. Being instantly aware of their great worth and value, from his knowledge of such articles, he became much comforted, thanking God for his great success, and such an admirable means of

deliverance from danger. Then reflecting, that in a short space of time he had been twice beaten and buffeted by fortune, lest a third misfortune might follow, he consulted with himself how he might safely bring so rich a booty to his own house. Wherefore, that no suspicion might attach to him, having taken out the jewels, he told the good woman that the chest was of no further service to him; but if she pleased to lend him a small sack or bag, she might keep the coffer, as it might be useful to her in divers ways in her house. The woman gladly conformed to his desires, and Landolfo returned her infinite thanks for the kindness she had shewn him; and throwing his sack on his neck, passed by sea to Branditio, and from thence to Tranium, where the merchants of the city bestowed good garments on him, he acquainting them with his disastrous fortunes, but not a word concerning his last good success. Being come home in safety to Ravello, he fell on his knees, and thanked God for all his mercies to him. Then opening the sack, and viewing the jewels more at leisure than he had formerly done, he found them to be of such great value, that selling them only at a very reasonable price, he was three times richer than when he departed from his home. Having disposed of them all, he sent

a large sum of money to the good woman at Corfu, who had rescued him out of the sea, and saved his life in a danger so dreadful. The like he did at Tranium, to the merchants that had newly clothed him, living richly upon the remainder, and never adventuring more on the sea, but ending his days in wealth and honour.

EIGHTH DAY, NOVELLA III.

THERE dwelt not long since, in our city of Florence, a place which has indeed always possessed a variety of character and manners, a painter named Calandrino, a man of simple mind, and much addicted to novelties. The most part of his time he spent in the company of two brother painters, the one called Bruno, and the other Buffalmacco, both men of humour and mirth, and somewhat satirical. These men often visited Calandrino, and found much entertainment in his original and unaffected simplicity of mind. There lived in Florence at the same time a young man of very engaging manners, witty, and agreeable, called Maso del Saggio, who hearing of the extreme simplicity of Calandrino, resolved to derive some amusement from his love of the marvellous, and to excite his curiosity by some novel and wonderful tales. Happening, therefore, to meet him one day in the church of St. John, and observing him attentively engaged in admiring the painting and sculpture of the tabernacle, which had been lately placed over the altar in that church, he thought he had found a fit opportunity of putting his scheme in

execution, and acquainting one of his friends with his intentions, they walked together to the spot where Calandrino was seated by himself, and seeming not to be aware of his presence, began to converse between themselves of the qualities of various kinds of precious stones, of which Maso spoke with all the confidence of an experienced and skilful lapidary. Calandrino lent a ready ear to their conference, and rising from his seat, and perceiving from their loud speaking that their conversation was not of a private nature, he accosted them. Maso was not a little delighted at this, and pursuing his discourse, Calandrino at length asked him where these stones were to be found? Maso replied: "They mostly abound in Berlinzone, near a city of the Baschi, in a country called Bengodi, in which the vines are tied with sausages, a goose is sold for a penny, and the goslings given into the bargain; where there is also a high mountain made of Parmesan grated cheese, whereon dwell people whose sole employ is to make macaroni and other dainties, boiling them with capon broth, and afterwards throwing them out to all who choose to catch them; and near to the mountain runs a river of white wine, the best that was ever drank, and without one drop of water in it."—"Oh!" exclaimed Calandrino, "what a delightful country to live in!"

but pray, Sir, tell me, what do they with the capons after they have boiled them?"—"The Baschi," said Maso, "eat them all!"—"Have you," said Calandrino, "ever been in that country?"—"How," answered Maso, "Do you ask me, if I were ever there? a thousand times at the least!"—"And how far, I pray you, is this happy land from our city?" quoth Calandrino.—"In truth," replied Maso, "the miles are scarcely to be numbered; but for the most part we travel when we are in our beds at night, and if a man dream aright, he may be there in a few minutes." "Surely, Sir," said Calandrino, "it is further hence than to Abruzzo?"—"Undoubtedly," replied Maso, "but to a willing mind no travel is tedious." Calandrino observing that Maso delivered all these speeches with a stedfast and grave countenance, and without any gesture that he could construe into distrust, gave as much credit to them as to any matter of manifest truth, and said with much simplicity, "Believe me, Sir, the journey is too far for me to undertake; but if it were somewhat nearer I should like to accompany you thither to see them make this macaroni, and take my fill of it. But now we are conversing, allow me, Sir, to ask you whether or not any of the precious stones you just now spoke of are to be found in that country?"—"Yes, indeed," re-

plied Maso, "there are two kinds of them to be found in those territories, and both possessing eminent virtues. The one kind are the sandstones of Settignano, and of Montisci, which are of such excellent quality, that when millstones or grindstones are to be made, they knead the sand as they do meal, and make them in what form they please, in which respect they have a saying there, That grace is from God, and millstones from Montisci! Such plenty are there of these millstones, so lightly here esteemed among us as emeralds are with them, that there are whole mountains of them far greater than our Montemorello, which shine with a prodigious brightness at midnight, if you will believe me. They moreover cut and polish these millstones, and enchase them in rings, which are sent to the great Soldan, who gives whatever price they ask for them. The other is a stone which most of our lapidaries call heliotropium, and is of admirable virtue, for whoever carries it about his person is thereby rendered inviolable as long as he pleases." Calandrino then said, "This is wonderful indeed; but where else are these latter kind to be found?" To which Maso replied, "They are not unfrequently to be found on our Mugnone."—"Of what size and colour is this stone?" said Calandrino. "It is of various sizes," replied Maso,

"some larger than others, but uniformly black."— Calandrino treasuring up all these things in his mind, and pretending to have some urgent business on hand, took leave of Maso, secretly proposing to himself to go in quest of these stones; but resolved to do nothing until he had first seen his friends Bruno and Buffalmacco, to whom he was much attached. He went therefore immediately in pursuit of them, in order that they three might have the honour of first discovering these stones, and consumed the whole morning in looking for them. At last recollecting that they were painting in the convent of the sisters of Faenza, neglecting all other affairs, and though the cold was extreme, he ran to them in all haste, and thus addressed them: "My good friends, if you will follow my advice, we three may shortly become the richest men in Florence, for I have just now learnt from a man of undeniable veracity, that in Mugnone there is to be found a stone which renders any person that carries it about him invisible at his pleasure; and if you will be persuaded by me, we will all three go there before any one else to look for it, and we shall find it to a certainty, because I know its description; and when we have found it, we have nothing to do but to put it in our pockets, and go to the tables of the bankers and money

changers; which we see daily loaded with gold and silver, and help ourselves to as much as we please. Nobody can detect us, for we shall be invisible, and we shall thus speedily become rich without toiling all day on these church walls like slimy snails, as we poor artists are forced to do." Bruno and Buffalmacco hearing this, began to smile, and looking archly at each other, seemed to express their surprise, and greatly commended the advice of Calandrino. Buffalmacco then asked Calandrino what the stone was called. Calandrino, who had but a stupid memory, had utterly forgotten the name of the stone, and therefore said, "What need have we of the name, since we are so well assured of its virtues? Let us not delay any longer, but go off in search of it." "But of what shape is it?" said Bruno; Calandrino replied: "They are to be found of all shapes, but uniformly black: therefore it seems to me that we had better collect all the stones that we find black, and we shall then be certain to find it among them: but let us depart without further loss of time." Bruno signified his assent; but turning to Buffalmacco said: "I fully agree with Calandrino, but I do not think that this is the proper time for our search, as the sun is now high, and is so hot, that we shall find all the stones on Mugnone dried and parched, and,

the very blackest will now seem whitest. But in the morning when the dew is on the ground, and before the sun has dried the earth, every stone will have its true colour. Besides, there are many labourers now working in the plain, who, seeing us occupied in so serious a search, may guess what we are seeking for, and may chance to find the stones before us, and we may then have our labour for our pains. Therefore in my opinion, this is an enterprise that should be taken in hand early in the morning, when the black stones will be easily distinguished from the white, and a festival day were the best of all others, as there will be nobody abroad to discover us." Buffalmacco applauded the advice of Bruno, and Calandrino assenting to it, they agreed that Sunday morning next ensuing should be the time when they would all go in pursuit of the stone, but Calandrino entreated them above all things not to reveal it to any person living, as it was confided to him in strict secrecy. Falling therefore on other subjects, Calandrino told them the wonders he had heard of the land of Bengodi, maintaining with solemn oaths and protestations that they were all true. Calandrino then took his departure, and the other two agreed upon the course they should pursue with him for their own amusement. Calandrino

waited impatiently for the Sunday morning, when he called upon his companions before break of day. They all three went out of the city at the gate of San Gallo, and did not halt until they came to the plain of Mugnone, where they immediately commenced their search for the marvellous stone. Calandrino went stealing on before the other two, persuading himself that he was born to find the heliotropium; and looking on every side of him, he rejected all other stones but the black, with which he first filled his breast, and afterwards both his pockets. He then took off his large painting apron, which he fastened with his girdle in the manner of a sack, and filled it also; and still not satisfied, he spread abroad his cloak, which being also loaded with stones, he bound up carefully for fear of losing the very least of them. Buffalmacco and Bruno during this time attentively eyed Calandrino, and observing that he had now completely loaded himself, and that their dinner hour was drawing nigh, Bruno, according to their scheme of merriment, said to Buffalmacco, pretending not to see Calandrino, although he was not far from them, "Buffalmacco, what is become of Calandrino?" Buffalmacco, who saw him close at hand, gazing all around as if desirous to find him, replied: "I saw him even now before us hard by."

“Undoubtedly,” said Bruno, “he has given us the slip, and gone secretly home to dinner, and making fools of us, has left us to pick up black stones on these scorching plains of Mugnone.” “Indeed he has served us right,” said Buffalmacco, “for allowing ourselves to be gulled by such stories, nor could any but we two have been so credulous as to believe in the virtues of this heliotropium.” Calandrino hearing them make use of these words while he stood so near to them, imagined that he had possessed himself of the genuine stone, and that by virtue of its qualities he was become invisible to his companions. His joy was now unbounded, and without saying a word he resolved to return home with all speed, leaving his friends to provide for themselves. Buffalmacco perceiving his intent, said to Bruno, “Why should we remain here any longer? let us return to the city.” To which Bruno replied—“Yes! let us go; but I vow to God, Calandrino shall no more make a fool of me, and were I now as near him as I was not long since, I would give him such a remembrance on the heel with this flint stone, as should stick by him for a month, and teach him a lasting lesson for abusing his friends;” and ere he had well finished his words, he struck Calandrino a violent blow on the heel with the stone. Though

the blow was evidently very painful, Calandrino still preserved his silence, and only mended his pace. Buffalmacco then selecting another large flint stone, said to Bruno, "Thou seest this pebble! If Calandrino were but here, he should have a brave knock on the loins;" and taking aim, he threw it, and struck Calandrino a violent blow on the back; and then all the way along the plain of Mugnone they did nothing but pelt him with stones, jesting and laughing until they came to the gates of San Gallo. They then threw down the remainder of the stones they had gathered, and stepping before Calandrino into the gateway, acquainted the guards with the whole matter, who in order to support the jest, would not seem to see Calandrino as he passed by them, and were exceedingly amused to observe him sweat and groan under his burthensome load. Without resting himself in any place, he proceeded straight to his own house, which was situated near to the mills; fortune favouring him so far in the course of his adventures, that as he passed along the river side, and afterwards through part of the city, he was neither met nor seen by any one, as every body was then at dinner. Calandrino, ready to sink under his burthen, at length entered his own house. His wife, a handsome and discreet woman of the name of

Monna Tessa, happened to be standing at the head of the stairs on his arrival, and being disconcerted and impatient at his long absence, somewhat angrily exclaimed, "I thought that the devil would never let thee come home! All the city have dined, and yet we must remain without our dinner." When Calandrino heard these words, and found that he was not invisible to his wife, he fell into a fit of rage, and exclaimed, "Wretch as thou art, thou hast utterly undone me; but I will reward thee for it:" and ascending into a small room, and there ridding himself of his burthen of stones, he ran down again to his wife, and seizing her by the hair of the head, and throwing her on the ground, beat and kicked her in the most unmerciful manner, giving her so many blows, in spite of all her tears and submission, that she was not able to move. Buffalmacco and Bruno, after they had spent some time in laughter with the guards at the gate, followed Calandrino at their leisure, and arriving at the door of his house, and hearing the disturbance up stairs between Calandrino and his wife, they called out to him. Calandrino, still in a furious rage, came to the window, and entreated they would come up to him. They, counterfeiting great surprise, ascended the stairs, and found the chamber floor covered with stones, and

Calandrino's wife seated in a corner, her limbs severely bruised, her hair dishevelled, and her face bleeding, and on the other side Calandrino himself wearied and exhausted, flung on a chair. After regarding him for some time, they said, "How now, Calandrino, art thou about building a house, that thou hast provided thyself with so many loads of stones?" and then added, "And, Monna Tessa! what has happened to her? You surely have been beating her. What is the meaning of this?" Calandrino exhausted with carrying the stones, and with his furious gust of passion, and moreover with the misfortune which he considered had befallen him, could not collect sufficient spirits to speak a single word in reply. Whereupon Buffalmacco said further, "Calandrino, if you have cause for anger in any other quarter, yet you should not have made such mockery of your friends as you have done to-day, carrying us out to the plains of Mugnone, like a couple of fools, and leaving us there without taking leave of us, or so much as bidding us good day. But be assured this is the last time thou wilt ever serve us in this manner." Calandrino, somewhat recovered, replied, "Alas! my friends, be not offended, the case is very different to what you imagine. Unfortunate man that I am! the rare and precious stone that you

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speak of I found, and will relate the whole truth to you. You must know then, that when you asked each other the first time, what was become of me, I was hard by you, not more than two yards distance; and perceiving that you saw me not, I went before you, smiling to myself to hear you vent your rage upon me ;” and proceeding in his discourse, he recounted all that had happened on his way home; and to convince them shewed them where he was struck on the back and on the heel; and further added, “ As I passed through the gates, I saw you standing with the guards, but by virtue of the stone I carried in my bosom, was undiscovered of you all, and in going through the streets I met many friends and acquaintances, who are in the daily habit of stopping and conversing with me, and yet none of them addressed me as I passed invisible to them all. But at length arriving at my own house, this fiend of a woman waiting on the stairs’ head by ill luck happened to see me, as you well know that women cause all things to lose their virtue; so that I, who might have called myself the only happy man in Florence, am now the most miserable of all. Therefore did I justly beat her as long as my strength would allow me, and I know no reason why I should not yet tear her in a thousand pieces, for I may well curse the day of our

marriage, and the hour she entered my house." Bufalmacco and Bruno, when they heard this, feigned the greatest astonishment, though they were ready to burst with laughter, hearing Calandrino so confidently assert that he had found the wonderful stone, and lost it again by his wife's speaking to him. But when they saw him rise in a rage, with intent to beat her again, they stepped between them, protesting that his wife was in no wise to blame, but rather he himself, who knowing before hand that women cause all things to lose their virtue, had not expressly commanded her not to be seen in his presence all that day, until he had satisfied himself of the real qualities of the stone; and that doubtless Providence had deprived him of this good fortune, because though his friends had accompanied him and assisted him in the search, he had deceived them, and had not allowed them to participate in the benefit of the discovery. After much more conversation they with difficulty reconciled him to his wife, and leaving him overwhelmed with grief for the loss of the heliotropium, took their departure.

TENTH DAY, NOVELLA III.

IN the country of Cathay, if we may give faith to the relation of certain Genoese mariners, and other persons who have visited those parts, there once lived a man of the name of Nathan, of noble extraction, and rich beyond belief. Having his residence near to a great road, all people who travelled from the West to the East, or departed from the East to the West, were of necessity obliged to pass his abode, and possessing a noble and liberal mind, and desirous that his name should be famous for hospitality, with the assistance of some of the first architects of the country, he built in a short space of time one of the most magnificent palaces ever beheld, and furnished it in a most sumptuous manner with every thing becoming a man of his high rank; and having moreover a numerous and beautiful family, his house became the seat of mirth and festivity, all persons both on their arrival and on their departure being treated with singular honour and respect. He persevered so long in this laudable course of conduct that his name was deservedly spread through the West as well as the East, and being now full of years, but nothing abated

in his noble style of living, it happened that the fame of his hospitality reached the ears of a young man called Mitridanes, living in a country not very distant from his own. This young man finding himself not less rich than Nathan, and becoming envious of his fame, resolved within himself, by his superior hospitality, to eclipse the liberality of Nathan. Having therefore erected a palace similar to that of Nathan, he opened his gates with the most unbounded hospitality to all comers, and in a short time became justly renowned for his generosity. It happened one day as Mitridanes sate all alone in the court of his palace, that a poor woman entering at one of the gates, asked alms from him, and received them, and returning by the second gate, again asked and again received, and so successively to the twelfth gate; but returning for the thirteenth time, Mitridanes accosting her, said, " Good woman, methinks you are extremely urgent in your request ;" at the same time, however, bestowing his alms as before. When the old woman heard these words, she exclaimed, " Oh boundless charity of Nathan ! I entered at the two-and-thirty gates of his palace, asking alms, and was never recognized by him, but received at each of them, and I am here arrived only at the thirteenth, and I am recognized and reproved ;" and thus speak-

ing, without again returning, she departed. Mitridanes, when he had reflected on the words of the old woman, which added to the fame of Nathan, and so much diminished his own, was seized with a sudden passion, and exclaimed, "Alas! when shall I only attain to the liberality of Nathan, for to surpass him I have no hope, when I am so far behind him, in such trifling matters. Truly all my endeavours will be vain unless he be removed, which if his great age does not speedily effect, I must perform with my own hands;" and rising in this frame of mind, without communicating his intentions to any one, he departed with a few attendants on horseback, and on the third day, arriving in the neighbourhood of Nathan's palace, he desired his attendants not to make him known, and to procure themselves lodgings, and wait for his return. The evening now drawing on, he proceeded forwards alone, and happened to meet Nathan himself near his own palace, who, in a plain dress, was indulging in a solitary walk for his recreation. Mitridanes, not knowing him, asked him if he could direct him to the residence of Nathan. Nathan cheerfully answered, "My son, there is no one in this country who can instruct you better on that head than myself, and, if it be agreeable to you, I will shew you the way." Mitridanes replied, that he

would in that do him a great kindness, but that he wished neither to be known nor seen of Nathan. To this Nathan answered, "Your request in this respect shall be observed, since such is your wish." Mitridanes then dismounting from his horse, and entering into agreeable conversation with Nathan, they proceeded together towards the palace. They were no sooner arrived there, than Nathan made signs to one of his servants to take the young man's horse, and, whispering at the same time in his ear, directed that neither he nor any of his household should discover him to the young man. As soon as they entered the palace, he placed Mitridanes in a sumptuous chamber, where none saw him except the servants who were appointed to wait on him, and, paying him the greatest possible respect, he himself remained to keep him company. Mitridanes being thus left alone with Nathan, although he held him in great reverence for his age, at length asked him who he was; to which Nathan replied, "I am, as you see, but a poor servant of Nathan, who have grown up with him from infancy, and am now like him well stricken in years; yet hath he never bestowed any other advancement upon me than what you see, in which respect how much soever other men may commend him, yet have I no cause to do it." These words

afforded some hope to Mitridanes that he might be enabled, by a proper degree of caution, to put in execution his wicked determination. Nathan now in a courteous manner asked him in return who he was, and the business which led him to the palace, offering his advice and assistance to the utmost of his power. Mitridanes for some time debated within himself what to reply; but resolving at last to confide his intentions, with great circumlocution he entreated his secrecy, and after that his counsel and aid, and then informed him who he was, and the object of his visit, and communicated his whole design to him. When Nathan had heard this explanation, and saw the evil intentions of Mitridanes, he was sensibly moved, but with great presence of mind, and an unaltered countenance, replied, "Your father, Mitridanes, was an honorable man, and I perceive that you are determined not to degenerate from him, having adopted so noble a system of hospitality, and I very much commend you for the envy you bear to the virtues of Nathan, for if there were sufficient of such noble deeds, the world, which is now most miserable, would soon become good and happy. The proposition which you have made known to me shall assuredly be kept secret, in which, though I cannot give you any great aid, I will yet communicate a piece of

intelligence that may be of service to you. You must know then, that at about a half mile distant from hence, there is a small wood, in which Nathan is accustomed to walk alone almost every morning, making it his recreation for a considerable space of time. It will then be an easy matter for you to find him there and accomplish your object. If you should succeed in slaying him, you may then return home without interruption, not indeed by the way you came, but by another road which you will find as you leave the wood, on your left hand, and though somewhat wild and overgrown with underwood, it will be a nearer and safer way to your house." Mitridanes, when he had received this information, and Nathan had left him, secretly rejoined his attendants, and told them where to await for him on the following day. Early the next morning, Nathan, in conformity with the counsel he gave to Mitridanes, departed alone to the wood, the place appointed for his death. Mitridanes having risen, and taken up his bow and his sword (not having any other arms with him) and mounting his horse, proceeded to the wood, where he discovered Nathan walking at some distance all alone, taking his usual recreation ; and reflecting that before he slew him, he should like to see him, and speak with him, he rode suddenly up to

him, and seizing him by the band of his bonnet, cried, "Die! wretch as thou art!" To which Nathan answered only, "It is meet that I should." Mitridanes, when he heard his voice looked upon his face, and immediately recognized him to be the same man who had received him with so much benignity and familiarity, and had counselled him so faithfully; and his fury instantly subsiding, and his revenge turning into shame, he cast away the sword which he had drawn for the purpose of slaying him, and dismounting from his horse, threw himself in tears at the feet of Nathan, saying, "Dearest father, I humbly confess your unbounded liberality, perceiving with what caution you have manifested your spirit to me; and God, who has had a greater regard to my duty than I have myself had, has at this moment of my utmost need opened my intellectual eyes, which wretched envy had closed, and the readier you have been to favour me, the more deeply do I deplore my transgression. Revenge yourself on me therefore, in whatever way you judge most suitable to my offence." Nathan then raising Mitridanes from the ground, and kissing his cheek, and tenderly embracing him, said, "My son, with regard to your attempt on my life, whatever you may term it, there is no need for you either to ask or receive pardon, since it

was not through malice, but a desire of being reputed more estimable than me, that you did it. Be assured therefore of my good will, and believe that no other man will love you with the affection which I bear towards you, justly appreciating the magnanimity of your mind, which was bent, not on amassing heaps of money, as wretched misers do, but on spending it with liberality. Nor blush at having wished to become famous by my death, nor think that it excites my surprise. The most potent emperors and kings, instigated by the same feelings as yourself, have often slain, not one man only, as you wished to have done, but countless multitudes of men, and have burnt and destroyed cities in order to extend their dominions, and perpetuate their fame. Therefore when you designed to render yourself famous by taking my life, you did not contemplate any thing new or strange, but only a thing of common occurrence." Mitridanes could not receive this apology as any excuse for his own evil designs, but thanking Nathan for the kindness he had manifested, expressed his astonishment that Nathan should have assented to his plan, and plotted and contrived his own death. To which Nathan replied: "Mitridanes, I do not wish that you should feel surprised either at my advice or my disposition of mind, for it was my object

to gratify you in what you were ambitious of effecting, as no one ever came to my house whom I did not satisfy to the utmost of my power in the way most agreeable to him; and seeing that you came here with a desire to possess yourself of my life, in order that you might not be the only person who ever departed from me dissatisfied, I immediately resolved to give it you, and I now pray and entreat you that if you are still desirous of it, you will take it and satisfy yourself, as I know not how I could better dispose of it. I have now lived eighty years, and they have passed away in pleasure and happiness, and I know from the course of nature and the departure of my contemporaries, that I have only a short span of life remaining. I therefore consider it much better to give away that as I have been in the habit of bestowing my other treasures, than to keep it until it shall be rudely forced from me by nature. A hundred years would indeed be a poor gift; how much less then are six or eight years, which are all I can expect! Take my life then, I entreat you, if it be agreeable to you; for whilst I have lived, I never found any one else that was desirous of having it, and I know not when any one else may ask for it, if you do not accept of it; and if I should not find any one to take it, I know that the longer I

keep it, the less value it will be of, and therefore, lest it should become quite vile and useless, I pray you to accept of it." Mitridanes, deeply blushing with shame, replied, "God forbid, Sir, that I should take so dear a thing as your life, and may God pardon me for my evil designs. Rather than diminish the term of your life, I would gladly, if it were in my power, add mine own to lengthen it." "And will you then, indeed add to it?" Nathan smartly replied, "and oblige me to do that to you which as yet I never did unto any man, namely, rob you to enrich myself."—"Certainly," said Mitridanes. "Then," said Nathan, "you shall do as I direct. You shall remain a young man as you are here in my house, and shall have the name of Nathan, and I will go to your residence, and call myself Mitridanes." To which Mitridanes replied, "If indeed I knew how to act like you, I would without hesitation accept your offer; but since it is very evident that my deeds would diminish the reputation of Nathan, and as I am not desirous to destroy in another that which I cannot myself obtain, I will not accept your offer; but as you have worthily taught me, will live contented with my own condition." This and much more agreeable conversation passed between Nathan and Mitridanes as they returned to the palace, where

Nathan sumptuously entertained Mitridanes for many days, and encouraged by every means in his power his noble spirit of emulation. And Mitridanes, now wishing to return to his own house with his attendants, Nathan having bade him farewell, he departed, having found by good experience that he could never hope to surpass Nathan in liberality.



TENTH DAY, NOVELLA IX.

It is well known that in the time of the Emperor Frederic I., there was a general confederacy throughout Christendom, for the purpose of recovering the Holy Land from the infidels. Of which circumstance, Saladin, a noble lord, and at that time soldan of Babylon, having early intelligence, resolved in his own mind to obtain a personal view of the preparations the Christians were making for their crusade, in order the better to provide for his own defence. Having therefore put in order all his affairs in Egypt, and giving out that he was going on a pilgrimage, and accompanied by three of his principal lords and counsellors, and with three attendants only, he set off on his journey under the disguise of a merchant. After having gone through many Christian countries, and travelling through Lombardy in order to pass the mountains, it happened that in going between Milan and Pavia, and evening coming on, they fell in with a gentleman, Messer Torello d'Istria of Pavia, who with his attendants, and dogs, and falcons, was then passing his time at a beautiful seat which he possessed on the Tesino.

As soon as Messer Torello observed the travellers, and saw that they were gentlemen and strangers, he was desirous of paying respect to them; and on Saladin asking one of his attendants how far it was to Pavia, and whether or not they could reach the city in good time, Messer Torello did not allow his servant to reply, but accosting them himself, said, "You cannot, gentlemen, reach Pavia this evening in time to pass the gates." "Then," said Saladin, "have the kindness to inform us (as we are strangers) where we may obtain a lodging for the night." Messer Torello answered: "This I will cheerfully do. I was just on the eve of sending one of my people to the neighbourhood of Pavia on an errand. I will therefore send him with you, and he will conduct you to a place where I hope you will find good entertainment." Then addressing himself to one of the most discreet of his servants, he directed him how to act, and sent him with the strangers; and hastening himself with all despatch to his own house, he ordered as elegant a supper as the time would allow, to be prepared, and the tables to be laid in the garden; and having done this he returned to the door to receive his guests. The servant engaging the travellers in conversation on various subjects, led them a little way round through the coun-

try to his master's house, without informing them to what place he was conducting them. As soon as Messer Torello saw them approach, he advanced to them on foot, and receiving them with a smile, said, "Gentlemen, you are very welcome." Saladin, who was a polite man, saw that this gentleman, being in doubt whether or not they might have accepted an invitation for the night, had thus by a friendly stratagem conducted them to his own house, and said, "Sir, if it were possible to chide a gentleman for his hospitality, we might chide you, who (to say nothing of our having interrupted you on your journey) have thus brought us to share your noble courtesy, when we had no claim on you but from our inquiry on the road." Messer Torello discreetly and eloquently replied: "Gentlemen, this reception which I have given you is, I know, in respect of your rank, a poor one indeed, but in truth you could not find any eligible place out of Pavia this evening, and I beg you therefore not to murmur that you have been thus brought somewhat out of your way to obtain a less uncomfortable lodging." Whilst he was thus speaking, his servants came up, and received the travellers' horses as they dismounted. Messer Torello then led the three gentlemen to the chambers prepared for them, where their boots were

pulled off, where they were refreshed with some cool wine, and where they were detained in agreeable conversation until the hour of supper. Saladin and his companions being acquainted with the Latin tongue, were enabled to understand Messer Torello, and they all agreed amongst themselves that he was the most accomplished and agreeable cavalier, both in manners and in conversation, that they had ever met with. Messer Torello on his part rightly judged the travellers to be men of high birth, and deeply regretted that it was not in his power to invite suitable company to meet them, and give them a more honourable reception. He however determined to make amends the next day, and acquainting one of his servants with his wishes, he despatched him with his orders to Pavia, the gates of which were not yet shut, to his wife, a lady of a discreet and noble mind. He then led the travellers into his garden, and politely inquired their country. To which Saladin replied: "We are merchants of Cyprus, travelling thence on our own affairs to Paris." Upon which Messer Torello said, "Would to God that our country produced such gentlemen as your Cyprus produceth merchants;" and whilst they were thus conversing, supper was announced, and they were honourably served with all that the house afforded. As

soon as the tables were withdrawn, Messer Torello judging that the travellers would be fatigued, conducted them to their chambers, where comfortable beds were prepared for them, and he himself also retired to rest. The serving man who was despatched to Pavia, communicated his message to his mistress, who with true magnanimity of mind, immediately called together all the friends and servants of Messer Torello, and provided every thing suitable for a grand entertainment, sending by torch-light to invite many of the most noble citizens to the feast, and arranging every thing agreeably to the commands she received from her husband. The next morning the travellers prepared for their departure, and Messer Torello accompanied them on horseback, taking his falcons with him, and leading them towards the river, where they for some time partook of his sport. But Saladin now requesting that he might have some person to direct him to Pavia, and to the best inn in the city, Messer Torello replied: "I will myself have the pleasure to conduct you, as my affairs lead me thither to day." They believing him, remained satisfied, and proceeded with him on the road, and it being now the third hour when they reached the city, and supposing they were going to one of the principal hotels, they arrived with Messer

Torello at his own gates, where there were nearly fifty of the chief citizens already in attendance to receive them as they dismounted from their horses. Saladin and his companions were immediately aware of the true state of the case, and said, "Messer Torello, this is not what we requested of you. You have done more than we wished the last night, when you would not allow us to proceed on our journey." To which Messer Torello replied: "Gentlemen, for the pleasure of your company last night, I was indebted rather to chance than to yourselves, which as the hour was late compelled you to take shelter in my poor house; but to day I hope to be beholden to your bounty, and these gentlemen with me whom you see around you, to whom your courtesy, I feel assured, will not allow you to deny the honour of your company to dinner." Saladin and his companions being thus overcome, dismounted, and were received by the gentlemen, and politely conducted to their chambers, which were sumptuously prepared for them, and having thrown off their travelling dresses and refreshed themselves, they entered the dining room, which was most splendidly furnished, and water being offered for their hands, they were seated at table, and magnificently served with a profusion of viands, insomuch that the emperor himself

could not have been entertained with greater honour. Although Saladin and his companions were men of high birth, and accustomed to the display of great magnificence, they were nevertheless astonished, and their surprise was increased the more when they considered the rank of their host, who they knew was not a nobleman, but a simple citizen. When dinner was ended and the tables withdrawn, after some conversation, the heat being very great, the gentlemen of Pavia retired to repose, and Messer Torello remained alone with the travellers, and entering with them into a chamber, in order that nothing of all his treasures might remain unseen by them, he ordered his lady to be called, who being very beautiful and of a noble presence, and attired in the richest dress, accompanied by two beautiful boys her sons, advanced, and gracefully saluted the strangers. On seeing her they rose from their seats and received her with becoming respect; and requesting her to sit down, showed great kindness to her two sons. The lady, after she had conversed with them for some little time, and Messer Torello going out of the room, politely inquired what country they were of, and whither they were bound. To which inquiries the travellers replied as they had done to Messer Torello. The lady then with

a gracious smile said, "I see then that my womanly prudence may be of service, and I trust you will not be so ungracious as to refuse my humble request, nor to consider as unworthy of acceptance a humble gift which I mean to offer to you; but bearing in mind that ladies can only give in conformity with their limited means, you will, I hope, rather regard the intention of the donor than the quality of the gift." She then ordered to be brought in two robes for each of the travellers, the one lined with cloth of gold, and the other with costly fur, more befitting lords than citizens and merchants, and three light vestments of satin richly embroidered. "I beg you," she then said, "to accept these robes, such as my husband wears, more especially as you are so far from your wives, and have already come a great distance, and have yet far to travel; and not forgetting that merchants are men of delicate habits, and although these are of slender value, they may yet do you service." The strangers were not a little amazed, and plainly saw that Messer Torello was determined to leave no instance of courtesy unperformed, and almost doubted when they considered the costliness of these noble robes, whether they were not discovered by Messer Torello; but one of them thus addressing the lady, said, "These are indeed,

Madam, valuable gifts, nor should we think it right in us to accept of them did you not make it a particular request, to which we cannot give a denial." Messer Torello now returning, the lady recommended them to the protection of God, and retired. Their servants were at the same time provided with suitable dresses. Messer Torello by his entreaties prevailed on them to stay over the day with him; and having reposed awhile, and clothed themselves in their new robes, they rode with Messer Torello through the city, and when the hour of supper approached they were again magnificently entertained. At a late hour they retired to rest, and the next day when they came to depart they found in the place of their horses, which were overwearied with travel, three beautiful palfreys, and fresh horses for their attendants; which when Saladin observed, he turned to his companions, and said, "By Allah! I never met with a more accomplished, courteous, and affable man than this Torello; and if all the Christian kings bear their offices as nobly as this gentleman his knight-hood, the Sultan of Babylon will not be able to resist the approach of one of them, much less so many as we see preparing for war;" and thus, after an interchange of much kind language, returning their grateful thanks, they mounted their horses. Messer Torello, with

many gentlemen, his friends, accompanied them for a considerable distance out of the city, and entreating Saladin to visit him on his return, said, "I know not, gentlemen, who you are, nor against your will do I desire it, but whether you be merchants or not, I beg you to hold me in your remembrance, and so I commend you to God." Saladin now having taken leave of all the friends of Torello, answered him in these words: "Sir, I wish that Fortune may one day put it in our power to let you see some of our merchandises, for the better confirmation of your belief." Saladin then departed with his companions, resolving in his noble mind, if his life should be spared in the war which was likely to ensue, to make a due return to Messer Torello for the honour thus shewn to him. He then discoursed at large with his companions of Torello and his lady, and his entertainments and presents, and spoke of them with deserved commendation. Saladin after visiting all the west, in which he endured great fatigues, at length embarked on board a ship and returned to Alexandria, in order to avail himself of the information he had received for his defence. Messer Torello, on his return to Pavia, often troubled himself with conjectures who these three travellers could be, but never made any correct surmise. The time of the Crusades now approaching,

and great preparations making on all sides, Messer Torello, notwithstanding the tears and entreaties of his wife, resolved to share in the honour of the enterprise; and having provided all requisites, and being now ready to mount his horse and take his departure, he thus addressed his lady, whom he dearly loved: "I now depart, dearest wife, as thou seest, on this holy enterprize, as well for the honour of the body as the salvation of the soul. I therefore commend to thy care all our possessions, and as a thousand accidents may intervene to prevent my return, I have to ask you one favour, which is, that if you have not certain intelligence of my death, you will wait a year, and a month, and a day, commencing from this day of my departure, before you marry again." The lady bitterly weeping, replied, "I know not how I shall surmount the sorrow in which your departure will involve me, but if I should survive, believe that whatever may happen to you, life or death, I shall live and die the wife of Messer Torello, and shall ever cherish his memory." To which Messer Torello answered, "Certain I am, lady, that you will keep this promise as far as lies in your own power, but you are young and beautiful, and of high parentage, and held in universal esteem; on which account I doubt not that many noble suitors,

if there be a rumour of my death, may ask you from your brothers and relations, from whose entreaties you will not be able to defend yourself, and will perhaps be forced to submit to their wishes, and this is the reason why I beg this delay, and no longer, from you." The lady then said, " I will conform myself to your wishes to the utmost of my power, and will obey you in all things you may command me, praying that Heaven will return you safe home before the time you have fixed ;" and with these words the lady weeping, embraced her husband, and taking a ring from her finger, said, " If I chance to die before I see you again, remember me when you look upon this ring." Receiving the ring, he mounted on horseback, and bidding all his friends adieu, departed on his way. When he reached Genoa he embarked on board a galley, and in a short time arrived at Acre, where he joined the Christian army. At this period a violent distemper broke out in the camp, and such was the good fortune or prudence of Saladin, that all the Christians who escaped from the pestilence were made his prisoners without a struggle, and were distributed and imprisoned in various cities, and amongst other persons, Messer Torello was made captive, and carried into Alexandria. Fearing to be discovered, he there took upon himself the keeping of falcons, of

which science he was a thorough master, and through this circumstance attracted the notice of Saladin, who released him from prison, and retained him as his falconer. Messer Torello, who was only known to the Sultan by the name of the Christian (as they did not recognise each other) often considered how he might effect his escape home to Pavia, and was about to attempt it, when there arrived certain ambassadors from Genoa for the redemption of their fellow citizens. To the care of these men he entrusted a letter to his beloved wife, informing her that he was living, and would return to her by the first opportunity, and earnestly entreated one of the ambassadors to deliver it into the hands of the Abbot of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, who was his uncle. At this time it happened one day that Saladin was conversing with Messer Torello respecting his falcons, when Messer Torello chanced to smile, and used a certain gesture and motion of the lips, which Saladin had frequently observed in his house at Pavia. This incident brought Messer Torello to the recollection of the Sultan, and regarding him attentively, and abandoning the former subject of his discourse, he said, "Tell me, Christian, of what country of the west are you?"—"My Lord," answered Messer Torello, "I am a Lombard, of a city called Pavia, a poor man of

humble condition." When Saladin heard this, feeling assured that his surmises were true, he said within himself, "God hath now happily given me an opportunity of testifying to this man my sense of his courtesy," and without more words he ordered his wardrobe to be opened in his chamber, and carrying Messer Torello with him, said, "Look on these robes, Christian, and tell me if you have ever seen any of them before." Messer Torello inspected them, and observed those which his wife had given to Saladin, but not thinking it possible they could be the same, said, "My Lord, I do not know them. It is indeed true that they resemble some robes which I wore when three travelling merchants once arrived at my house." Saladin then being no longer able to restrain himself, tenderly embraced him, and said, "You are Messer Torello d'Istria, and I am one of the three merchants to whom your lady gave these robes, and now the time is arrived to show you my merchandise, as, on my departure, I said might possibly happen." Messer Torello on hearing these words was at the same moment delighted and abashed; delighted at having received so noble a guest in his house, and abashed at not having entertained him with more honour. To which Saladin replied, "Messer Torello, since it has pleased God to send you to

me, account yourself sole lord here, and consider me as a private person ;" and immediately causing Messer Torello to be clothed in royal robes, he introduced him at a great feast to the chief of his nobility, and relating many things in his praise, he commanded all who wished to share his favour to shew Messer Torello equal honour with himself, a command which they all cheerfully complied with, but much more so than all the rest, the two lords who had accompanied Saladin in his travels. The good fortune to which Messer Torello thus suddenly found himself elevated, in some degree banished his grief and the thoughts of home, more particularly so as he fully relied on his letter reaching the hands of his uncle. Now it happened, that on the day on which the Christian army was made captive by Saladin, there died and was buried a certain Provençal knight, called Messer Torello di Dignes, and Messer Torello d'Istria being known throughout the army as a man of family, and it being said that Messer Torello was dead, every one imagined it to be Messer Torello d'Istria, and the circumstance of his being made prisoner happening at the same moment, prevented the truth from being known, and many Italians returning home, several of them asserted that they had seen Messer Torello dead, and had assisted at his funeral. The report reached the ears of his lady and

his kindred, and was the cause of unspeakable grief not only to them, but to every one who had known him. It would be vain to attempt to describe the lamentation, sighs, and tears of his wife, who after some months of mourning, was interrupted in her sorrow by many of the greatest men in Lombardy becoming her suitors, and by her brother and relations intreating her to make choice of a second husband. She strongly resisted these solicitations, but was at length compelled to assent to the urgent wishes of her friends, under condition that she should be permitted to wait the time prescribed to her by Messer Torello. While matters were thus passing in Pavia, and the day drawing nigh in which she would be claimed by her new husband, it happened that Messer Torello recognised in Alexandria one of the persons whom he had seen with the Genoese ambassadors, on board the galley which had sailed, and calling to him, he inquired whether or not they had had a prosperous voyage, and when they had arrived at Genoa. To which the person replied, "My Lord, our vessel made a most disastrous voyage, as is known in Crete, where I remained some time; for when we were near to Sicily, there arose a violent north wind, which drove us on the shoals of Barbary, where all but myself perished, and amongst the rest my two

brothers." Messer Torello placing implicit belief in this intelligence, which was indeed true, and remembering that the time he had required from his wife would terminate in a few days, and being now sensible that his situation could not be known in Pavia, believed to a certainty that his lady would be married again, the thoughts of which threw him into such grief that he could neither eat nor sleep, but lay in his bed a prey to despair. Saladin, hearing of his illness, and bearing him the greatest affection, at length learned the cause of his grief, and blamed him exceedingly that he had not previously informed him of it; but at the same time intreated him to be comforted, as he would engage that Messer Torello should be in Pavia before the time had expired. Messer Torello was in some degree comforted with this promise, having often heard that such things were practicable, and intreated Saladin that he would not delay his preparations. Saladin immediately requested one of his magicians, of whose powers he had already made trial, to contrive some mode by which Messer Torello should be transported on a bed in one night to Pavia. To which the magician replied, that it should be done; but that for his own sake, Messer Torello should take a sleeping draught. Having thus arranged matters, Saladin turned to

Messer Torello, and finding him to persist in his wishes to be in Pavia at a certain day, alive or dead, thus addressed him :—" Messer Torello, if you love your lady with so much devotion, and fear lest she may become the wife of another, heaven is my witness that I cannot blame you, since of all the women I have ever seen, she is the one whose appearance, manners, and address, (not to mention beauty, which is a perishable quality) have won my admiration above all others. It would indeed have been my pride, since fortune has sent you here, that we might together have enjoyed the term of life prescribed to us, in reigning together over this kingdom, which I possess, as joint rulers; but as heaven denies me this favour, and you are resolved to return to Pavia or to die, I should have wished to have known the time, that I might have accompanied you to your own house, with a suitable retinue of my nobility, in order to pay a just tribute to your virtues. But as this too is denied me, and as you desire to be there immediately, I will fulfil your wishes in the manner I have related." To which Messer Torello said, "My lord, your deeds have sufficiently testified your affection to me without words, and far beyond my merits; but I now intreat you that this last act of your kindness may be speedily effected, since to-

morrow is the latest day that will be allowed me." Saladin assured him it should be done; and on the next day, intending to send Messer Torello away in the evening, he ordered a magnificent bed to be set up in the great hall of his palace, the mattress formed of velvet and cloth of gold, and the quilts, counterpoints, and coverings, sumptuously embroidered with orient pearls and precious stones of inestimable value, with two richly wrought pillows, befitting so noble a bed; and having ordered this, he commanded that Messer Torello, who was now recovered, should be clothed in the richest dress, after the fashion of the Saracens, that ever was seen, and placed on his head one of the largest of his own turbans; and the hour being now late, Saladin, accompanied by many of his lords, entered the chamber where Messer Torello was, and seating himself at his bedside, almost in tears thus spoke:—"Messer Torello, the hour which is to separate us approaches, and as I cannot possibly accompany you, from the nature of the journey you have to undertake, I must bid you adieu in this chamber; and am now come for that purpose; but before I recommend you to God, I intreat you, by that affection and friendship which subsists between us, that you will often think of me, and ere our lives end, that you will, after having arranged all your

affairs in Lombardy, return to visit me once more, and make atonement for this sudden departure; and to this end, do not fear to trouble me with your letters, and to ask any thing that may be in my power, which I would certainly rather grant to you than to any man living." On this, Messer Torello could not refrain from weeping, and in a few words answered, that it was impossible his benefits and favors could ever be effaced from his remembrance, and that he would without fail execute his commands as soon as an opportunity should be afforded him; on which Saladin affectionately embraced and kissed him, and bade him adieu with many tears. He then left the chamber, his barons accompanying him, and passed into the hall where the bed was prepared, and it waxing late, and the magician waiting, a physician came in, and presented a beverage to Messer Torello, who considering it a cordial, drank it off, and became immediately entranced. He was then placed in his sleep, by command of Saladin, upon the sumptuous bed, on which was affixed a large and beautiful crown of great value, and an inscription, which denoted it to be sent by Saladin to the wife of Messer Torello; and he further placed on the finger of Messer Torello a ring, in which was enchased a carbuncle of such dazzling brightness, that it shone

like a flaming torch, and the value of which it was impossible to estimate. He also girded round him a rich sword, highly decorated with a clasp in front, in which were set the finest pearls ever seen, and many precious stones; and at each side of him he placed two large basins of gold filled with ducats, and many ropes of pearls, and rings and girdles; and other treasures, which it would be too tedious to enumerate, were strewed around him. Saladin then once again kissed Messer Torello, and commanded the magician to despatch, upon which the bed, with Messer Torello, was invisibly carried thence, and was transported and set down in the church of San Pietro, in Ciel d'Oro in Pavia, as had been agreed on. When the bell rang for matins, one of the monks, who was the sexton, entering the church with a light in his hand, and suddenly coming upon this sumptuous bed, was seized with a panic, and fled instantly out of the church. The abbot and the monks seeing him thus terrified were surprised, and demanded the cause of his fright. The monk then informed him what he had seen. "How is this?" said the abbot; "thou art not a child, nor a new comer to the church, that thou shouldest be thus terrified; wherefore return with us, and let us see the cause of thy fears." Having therefore lighted their

torches, the abbot and his monks entered the church, where to their amazement, they found the magnificent bed, and Messer Torello laid upon it in a recumbent posture in a deep sleep. Whilst they stood around in astonishment, contemplating the costliness of the bed and the rich jewels, it happened that Messer Torello awoke, and heaved a deep sigh. The abbot and monks seeing him stir, all ran out of the church, crying aloud, "God and St. Peter save us!" Messer Torello, opening his eyes, and looking around him, found himself on the spot to which Saladin had promised to transport him, and was thereon greatly rejoiced; and sitting up in bed, and regarding all the riches around him, though he before well knew the munificence of Saladin, he found it now tenfold increased; but seeing the monks flying, and guessing the cause, he called upon the abbot by name, and intreated him to return without fear, as he was no other than his nephew Torello. The abbot, when he heard this, became more terrified than before, as he considered his nephew to have been dead for many months past; but after some pause and consideration, and hearing himself still called on, and blessing himself with the sign of the cross, he advanced somewhat nearer to the bed, when Messer Torello said, "Holy father, of what are you afraid? I am

am living, thanks be to God, and am thus returned from beyond sea." The abbot attentively regarded him, and although his beard was grown, and he was dressed in the Arabian costume, he yet recognized his features, and taking him by the hand said, "Son, thou art happily returned, but thou needest not wonder at my alarm, since in all this country there is not a person who does not believe thee to be dead; in proof of which I may inform thee that thy wife, overcome by the intreaties of her friends, and against her own wishes, is this morning to be married to a new husband, and a marriage feast is prepared in honour of these her second nuptials." Messer Torello, rising from his bed, and giving the abbot and monks a gracious reception, earnestly intreated that none of them would divulge his return until he had made all his arrangements. He then placed his jewels in safety, and recounted his adventures to the abbot. The abbot, rejoicing in his good fortune, united with him in returning thanks to God for his safe return. Messer Torello next inquired from the abbot who was the intended new husband of the lady. The abbot then informed him; and Messer Torello said, "Before my return be known, I wish to see how my wife is disposed with respect to these intended nuptials, and although it is not customary

for religious persons to attend on such occasions, yet I intreat you, out of regard to me, to carry me to the marriage feast, as a guest under your protection." The abbot willingly consented; and the next day sent to the intended bridegroom, to beg his permission to be present at the marriage, with a stranger newly arrived. To which the gentleman replied, that he should receive them both with infinite pleasure. The dinner hour being now come, Messer Torello, in the same dress which he wore when the abbot found him in the church, went to the house of the bridegroom, where he excited the attention of all the guests, but was not recognized by any of them, as the abbot represented him to be a Saracen of rank, sent by the sultan on an embassy to the King of France. Messer Torello was then placed at a table directly opposite his lady, where he sate regarding her with great delight, and observed, to his joy, the trouble visible in her countenance on this second marriage. She in return gazed on him for some time; not that she at all recollected him, as his beard and foreign dress, and the firm belief of his death, prevented any suspicion of the kind. Messer Torello thought the time was now come when he should make proof of her constancy, and ascertain whether or not she would recognize him; so taking in his

hand the ring which he had received from her on his departure; he called to him a young page, who was waiting on her, and said to him, "Go to the bride, and saluting her from me, inform her that it is a custom in my country, that when any stranger is invited to the marriage feast, the bride, in sign that he is welcome, offers to him the same cup in which she drinks herself, filled with the best wine, and when the stranger has drunk as much as is agreeable to him, the bride pledges him in the rest." The page delivered the message to the bride, who being alike courteous and affable, and considering Messer Torello to be a foreigner of rank, in order to convince him that his presence was acceptable to her, ordered a large cup of gold (which stood directly before her,) to be washed, and when it was filled with the choicest wine, to be carried to the stranger, which was done accordingly. Messer Torello having drunk to the bride, conveyed the ring into the cup, without any person perceiving it; and again covering the cup, returned it to the bride, who graciously received it, and, to honour the stranger, drank up the remainder of the wine, and seeing the ring, took it out unobserved by any of the company. She immediately recognized it to be the ring which she had given to Messer Torello on his departure, and fixing her eyes

stedfastly on the stranger, the cheerful blood mounting up into her cheeks, and returning again with remembrance to her heart, assured her, that however disguised, he was no other than her husband. She then suddenly started up like one possessed, and overthrew all before her, exclaiming, "My lord and husband! Messer Torello!" and flying to the table at which Messer Torello sate, without paying regard to the riches thereon, she cast it aside as much as her strength would allow, and throwing herself on her husband's neck, clasped him with such force, weeping and sobbing, that she could not be separated from him; nor did she shew any moderation in this excess of passion, until Messer Torello spoke, and intreated her to be patient and composed. Thus strangely was the solemnity disturbed; yet was every one glad and joyful at the return of so worthy a cavalier, who intreating them all to vouchsafe him silence, related all his adventures to the company, from the time of his departure to the present hour, concluding, that he was in no manner offended with the intended new bridegroom, who, from the assured report of his death, deserved no blame in making choice of his lady as his wife. The bridegroom, though his countenance was somewhat overcast, generously replied, that he relinquished his claim, being

convinced that the lady was Torello's wife. The lady then resigned the ring and the crown she had received from her intended husband, and placed on her finger the ring she had found in the cup, and on her head the rich crown sent to her by Saladin, and departing with such pomp and magnificence as had never before been seen in Pavia, they came to Messer Torello's house, the citizens considering it a miracle thus to recover Signor Torello again. Messer Torello then distributed his rich jewels, giving a part of them to the intended bridegroom, and another part to the abbot and others, and then despatched a messenger to Saladin with letters, to acquaint him with his happy return to his native country, and confessing his friendship and his obligations, and then lived many years with his noble lady, exercising greater courtesies to strangers than he had ever before done. Such was the happy termination of the misfortunes of Messer Torello, and the sorrows of his lady, and such the reward of their courteous hospitality.

SECOND DAY, NOVELLA VI.

AFTER the death of the Emperor Frederick II. Manfred was crowned King of Sicily, in whose court was a gentleman of Naples, in high authority, called Arrighetto Capece, who had a wife, a beautiful and elegant woman, by birth also a Neapolitan, called Madonna Beritola Caracciola. Whilst this Arrighetto was left in the government of the kingdom of Sicily, he received intelligence that Charles I. had won the battle of Beneventum, and slain Manfred, and seeing the whole kingdom soon after revolting to Charles, and placing little reliance on the fidelity of the Sicilians, and unwilling to make his submission to the enemy of his sovereign, he took instant measures to secure his safety by flight. His intentions were however discovered by the Sicilians, and he, and many of his friends, partisans of Manfred, were delivered over to the new king, and the possession of the island confirmed to him. Madonna Beritola on this sudden change of fortune, ignorant of the fate of her husband, and fearing the worst, abandoned every thing, and with her son, of about eight years of age, called Geoffrey, hired a bark, and fled in a destitute state to

Lipari. She there very soon gave birth to another son, whom she named Scacciato, (the poor expelled) and taking with her a nurse, they all went on board again, in order to return to her parents in Naples. But it fell out contrary to her expectations, for the vessel was driven from her course by a violent gale to the Isle of Poroga, where seeking shelter in a small bay, they waited till the storm should subside. Madonna Beritola went on shore in the island with the rest of the party, and happening in her walk to meet with a solitary and secluded dell, she sate down all alone to mourn over her lost husband. Day after day she indulged herself in this melancholy pleasure, and it happened on one occasion, when she was thus absent, that a corsair galley surprised their little bark, captured it, and carried it away, with all the persons on board. Madonna Beritola, when her mournful task was ended, returned as usual to the shore to her children, but was surprised to find the place deserted. Immediately suspecting what had really happened, she turned her eyes to the deep, and there saw the corsair departing at no great distance, carrying the smaller vessel away with her. From this she instantly perceived the extent of her calamity, and that, as before she had lost her husband, so she was now deprived of her children; and in this

wretched state, deserted, solitary, and friendless, calling on her husband and children, she fell down in a swoon on the sea-shore. No kind hand was near to throw cold water on her face, or restore her to herself; but her spirits took their own course, and as soon as her lost powers were restored to her, in a flood of tears and grief, she again called on her children, searching for them, though she knew it to be in vain, in every cave on the shore. She soon found that all her labours were fruitless, and night approaching, amidst conflicting hopes and fears, she began to provide for her own safety, and quitting the shore, returned to the spot which had been the scene of her daily lamentations. The night being passed, amidst a crowd of fears and alarms, the bright day again appeared, and compelled her to seek some food for her sustenance in the woods and fields; and having gathered some roots and herbs, she again resigned herself to melancholy reflections on her future destiny. As she traversed the woods, absorbed in these pensive meditations, she observed a goat enter a cave, and a little while after come forth again. Upon this she paused, and entering the cave found in it two young kids, yeaned as it seemed the self-same day. These two young kids in her present desolate state appeared to her the most engaging crea-

tures in the world ; and as from her recent delivery she had milk, she lay down before them, and taking them tenderly up in her arms, placed one to each breast, to which they made no refusal, and from that time seemed to make no distinction between her and their dam. The hapless Beritola thus found companions in her solitary abode, and preserved her life by feeding on roots, and drinking the running water, often weeping in silence when she remembered her husband and her children, and her former happy days, and making up her mind to live and die in this desert island. After she had led this savage life for some months, it happened that at the very spot where she had landed, there arrived a bark from Pisa, which remained there several days. On board this vessel was a gentleman called Conrad de' Marchesi Malespini, with his wife, a noble and devout woman. They had been absent on a pilgrimage, and having visited all the holy places in Apulia, were now on their return home. This gentleman, accompanied by his wife, happened one day to wander up into the island, not far from Madonna Beritola's solitary abode. Having his servants and dogs with him, the hounds, in hunting after game, came suddenly upon the two kids, which had now attained their growth, and were seeking their food. The kids finding them-

selves pursued by the hounds, fled through the wood to the cave where Madonna Beritola sate, seeming to implore her protection. Seeing their danger, she suddenly caught up a staff, and compelled the hounds to relinquish their pursuit. By this time Conrad and his wife, who had closely followed the chase, came up, and seeing what had passed, beheld with amazement a lady with long black dishevelled hair, savage in her appearance, and wretched in her attire; nor was Madonna Beritola less astonished to behold the strangers. When, at her request, Conrad had called off his dogs, they entreated to know who she was, and the reason of her living there. She then narrated her story, and expressed her determination to live and die in the island. When Conrad, who was well acquainted with Arrighetto Capece, heard her tale, compassion forced tears from his eyes, and he earnestly endeavoured to change her determination, offering to conduct her in safety to his own house, where he promised she should remain with him as much respected as his own sister, until fortune should again smile on her. When Madonna Beritola resisted these kind offers, the gentleman left his wife with her, saying, that he would go and procure some food for her, and bring her some of his wife's dress, as her own was rent and

torn, hoping by these means to induce her to change her mind. His wife remained with Madonna Beritola, compassionating her misfortunes, and when both viands and garments were brought, they prevailed on her by great intercession to change her dress, and to partake of the food, although she protested she would not depart into any place where she might be known. At length they persuaded her to accompany them to Lunigiana, carrying also with her the two kids and their dam, which were then sporting round her in the cave, to the great admiration of Conrad's lady. As soon as the weather grew favorable for their departure, Madonna Beritola embarked with Conrad and his wife, followed by the young goats and their dam, and as her name was known only to Conrad and his lady, the servants and ship's crew called her the goat-herdess. A gentle and favorable gale soon bringing them to the mouth of the Magra, they landed near Conrad's castle. Madonna Beritola here became a companion to the wife of Conrad, wearing a widow's dress, the goats always familiarly keeping them company.

The corsairs, who had seized on the bark in the island of Ponzo, and had carried it away in the absence of Madonna Beritola, sailed with their prize to Genoa, and there dividing the spoil amongst the

owners of the galley, it happened that the nurse of Madonna Beritola and the two children fell to the lot of one Messer Gasparino d'Oria, who sent them to his house to add to the number of his domestics, and to assist them in their duties. The nurse wept and grieved beyond measure at the loss of her lady, and the wretched condition into which she and the children were now fallen. But she saw that tears were of no avail, and that she must share in their fate, and though of humble condition, she was yet discreet; wherefore comforting herself as well as she could, and considering the nature of their disaster, she wisely judged that the children, if they were recognized, might incur greater dangers, and moreover indulging a hope that fortune might change, and perhaps restore them at some time or other to the expectancies of their birth, she resolved not to discover them to any person until a proper time presented itself, but to reply to all who asked her, that they were her own children. To the elder, who was called Geoffrey, she gave the name of Gianotto di Procida, but did not change the name of the youngest. She acquainted Geoffrey with the necessity of this alteration, and to what danger he exposed himself by making himself known; and this she many times and earnestly impressed on his mind,

and the boy very assiduously observed her injunctions. Thus badly clothed, and worse shod, the two boys, with their nurse, for many years patiently endured their hard lot under the roof of Messer Gasparino. But Gianotto, who had now reached his sixteenth year, had too high a spirit to remain a menial. Despising the baseness of servitude, he forsook the roof of Messer Gasparino, and entered on board a galley bound for Alexandria, and made many voyages, though without much advancement. At length, after the lapse of three or four years, being now full grown and of a handsome person, and having learnt that his father, whom he had considered as dead, was yet living, though held in prison by King Charles, he despaired of bettering his condition, and wandering about arrived at Lunigiana, and there by chance engaged himself in the service of Conrad Malespina, whose favor he soon won by his good conduct. He here frequently saw his mother, who still lived as a companion to Conrad's lady, though without recognizing her; nor did she know her son again, time had so much changed them both since their separation. Whilst Gianotto was thus in the service of Conrad, it happened that a daughter of Conrad, whose name was Spina, the widow of one Nicolo da Grignano, returned to her

father's house. She was beautiful, and engaging, and young, being little more than sixteen years of age, and from the first time she saw Gianotto, became deeply enamoured of him, which on his part was returned with an equal flame. This passion was indulged in by them for many months unknown to all; but relying too much on their imagined security, and forgetting the precautions requisite on such occasions, they were eventually surprised, first by the mother of the young lady, and afterwards by Conrad himself. Conrad was beyond measure grieved and exasperated at this discovery, and without further inquiry, ordered his servants to place them in confinement in one of his castles, and in the first movement of his rage, vowed to condemn them both to a shameful death. The mother of the lady, although she was irritated, and considered her daughter highly deserving of punishment for the indulgence of her passion; yet having learned from some words of Conrad, his intentions towards the culprits, she could not suffer the thoughts of exposing them to such danger, and instantly repaired to her husband, imploring him to set bounds to his wrath, and not, in his old age, to imbrue his hands in the blood of his child, but to satisfy his revenge by condemning them to imprisonment, and so letting them there atone for

their offence. By these intercessions the lady at length altered her husband's mind; and he now ordered that they should be separately imprisoned, but without any comforts, and on a restricted diet, until he should otherwise determine respecting them, which was accordingly done. Doomed to tears and captivity, and wretched sustenance, they were thus left to deplore their unhappy lot.

A year had now passed over Gianotto and Spina in their prison, without Conrad at all relenting; when it happened that Don Pedro, King of Arragon, by means of Messer Giandi Procida, caused an insurrection in Sicily, by which King Charles was suddenly dispossessed of that kingdom. This event was highly gratifying to Conrad, who was a Ghibelline; and Gianotto hearing this intelligence from one of his guards heaved a deep sigh, and said, "Unhappy wretch that I am, fourteen years I have been wandering, anxiously expecting this event, and now that it comes, I am unable to avail myself of it, being confined in a prison from which I shall probably never escape with life." "How," said the guard, "can the affairs of monarchs concern you so nearly? What have you to do in Sicily?" "My heart," he replied, "is well nigh broken, when I think of the high station my father held there; for although I was but a

child when we fled thence, I well remember him governor under King Manfred." "And who was your father?" said the guard. "My father," said Gianotto, "as I may now with safety deliver his name, is Arrighetto Capece, if he still lives, and my name is Geoffrey, and not Gianotto; and I doubt not that if I were now freed from prison, and could return to Sicily, I should have some place of authority bestowed on me." The honest guard, without any further inquiry, took the first opportunity of narrating this conversation to Conrad. Conrad seemed to hear it as a matter of indifference; but immediately repaired to Madonna Beritola, and courteously inquired if she had ever had a son by Arrighetto, of the name of Geoffrey. The lady replied in tears, that the elder of the two sons she had lost, was so called, and that if he were living, he would be then twenty-two years of age. On hearing this, Conrad imagined this Gianotto must be the person, and it occurred to him that he might give a signal instance of his forgiveness, and at the same time preserve the reputation of his daughter, by bestowing her in marriage on Geoffrey. He therefore commanded Gianotto to be secretly brought before him, and examined him minutely with regard to his past life; and finding, by undoubted proofs, that he was really the

eldest son of Arrighetto Capece, he thus addressed him: "Gianotto, you are well aware of the injury you have done me, with respect to my daughter, at a time when I relied on your fidelity, and when you should have served me with truth and honour; and there are many persons who, under such circumstances, would have condemned you to an ignominious death, which compassion would not suffer in me. Now that you inform me that you are the son of noble parents, I am as anxious as you can be yourself to put an end to your sufferings, and to release you from the wretched captivity in which you have so long pined, and thus restore your honour and my own at the same time. Spina, for whom you have entertained such a fervent passion, you well know is a widow, and her dowry is great and noble; her qualities, and those of her father and mother, you are intimately acquainted with; of your present situation I say nothing. It is therefore my wish, that as before she was too much beloved of you, she should now become your wife, and in the quality of my children both you and she may, as long as you think well, remain with me." Long confinement had emaciated Gianotto, but had in no degree reduced his noble spirit, founded on the consciousness of his high birth; nor had it at all impaired

the true affection he still bore to his fair friend; and although he earnestly desired what Conrad proposed, and saw himself wholly in his power, he fully maintained his noble bearing, and replied, "Conrad, neither love of authority, nor lust of gain, nor any other cause could induce me to become traitor to you or yours. It is true I loved your daughter, and love her still, and shall ever love her, since I consider her in every way worthy of my affection. That which you now offer me has long been the height of my desire, and if I had thought that you would have conceded it to me, I should long since have requested it of you, and it is now the more dear to me as it comes unexpected. But if your intentions do not answer to your words, I pray you not to flatter me with vain hopes, but to remand me to my solitary prison and hard usage; for my love is such to Spina, that out of regard to her I shall always esteem you and hold you in reverence, whatever your conduct may be to me." Conrad was not a little astonished at the lofty spirit of Gianotto, and esteemed him the more for his unabated love to his daughter, and instantly rising, he kissed his cheeks and embraced him, and without further delay desired that Spina should be brought to him. Spina had become pale and feeble through her imprison-

ment, and was as much changed in appearance as Gianotto. The nuptials, with the consent of all parties and according to the usage of our church, were immediately solemnized in the presence of Conrad; and, after the lapse of a few days, having provided them with every thing suitable, and their health being in some degree restored, it seemed to him high time to communicate the agreeable intelligence to their mothers. One day, therefore, addressing the goat-herdess, he said: "What would you think, Madam, if I were to shew you your eldest son, lately married to one of my daughters?" To which the goat-herdess replied, "I can only say that it will add to the obligations I am now under to you, if that be possible, and the more so, if you restore my son to me, who is dearer to me than my life; and rendering him to me in the manner you mention, it will bring back to me some portion of my lost hopes;" and with these words the tears streamed abundantly down her cheeks. Conrad then turning to his own wife, said, "And you, dear love, what will you say if I shew you such a son-in-law?" To which the lady answered, "What pleaseth you must satisfy me, be he a gentleman or a beggar." "Then," said Conrad, "I hope in the course of a few days to add to the happiness of you both." And the young cou-

plé having now recovered their good looks, and being suitably apparelled, Conrad said to Geoffrey, "Would it not add to your present joy to meet your long lost mother here?" "I can hardly," replied Geoffrey, "persuade myself that she has escaped with life from the midst of her calamities, but such an event would be doubly acceptable to me, as by her good counsels it is possible our family might be restored to its former station in society." Conrad then sent for the ladies, and they were both not a little surprised and delighted to see the new married couple, wondering what had so suddenly changed Conrad's resentment into affection, and induced him to give his daughter to Gianotto. Madonna Beritola calling to mind the words of Conrad, began to regard her son, and natural instinct awakening in her some recollection of the features of her son, without waiting for any other confirmation, she ran to him, and caught him in her arms, and clasped him to her bosom; nor in the fulness of her maternal joy was she able to utter a word. Her spirits at last were so entirely entranced, that she fell as if dead into the arms of her son. He, too, was struck with astonishment, recollecting to have seen her many times before in the castle without recognizing her; but the very transport of his heart assuring him that

she was his mother, he now blamed himself for his long neglect of her, threw his arms around her, and kissed and embraced her with a flood of filial tears. Conrad's lady and Spina now ran to the assistance of Madonna Beritola, and having by their friendly assiduity recovered her, she again embraced her son with many tears, and many tender words, and, overpowered with maternal love, kissed him a thousand times and more, he at the same time as strongly manifesting his filial affection. After many an interchange of joy, to the delight of the bystanders, they mutually related their past adventures to each other, and Conrad having communicated to his friends this new alliance in his family, and invited them to a magnificent feast on the occasion, Geoffrey addressing him, said, "Conrad, you have made me infinitely happy, and have conferred numerous favours on my honoured mother; but that at this joyful conclusion nothing may remain undone that it is in your power to effect, I have to entreat that you will farther add to the felicity of my mother, and the guests, and myself, by sending for my brother, who is now a servant to Messer Gasparino d'Oris, who as I have related to you, captured us both in his corsair bark on the seas, and afterwards I will entreat you to despatch a messenger into Sicily, who may fully

inform himself of the present state of that country, and make inquiries after my father Arrighetto, whether he be dead or alive; and if he be living, whether he hold any place in authority under the government, and then return to us with all the information in his power." Conrad was so much pleased with this request of Geoffrey, that he immediately despatched two confidential persons to Genoa and Sicily. The envoy to Genoa soon found Messer Gasparino, and earnestly requested him, from Conrad, to send him the exiled youth and his nurse, detailing to him all that Conrad had done for the other son and his mother. Messer Gasparino was not a little surprised at this request, but said, "It will be a pleasure to me to gratify Messer Conrad's wishes to the utmost of my power. It is indeed true that I have had in my house for the last fourteen years the boy you mention, and a woman, who has passed for his mother, both of whom I will freely deliver up to your master; but at the same time tell him from me to be cautious how he lends belief to the tales of Gianotto, who now, you say, calls himself Geoffrey, because he is more mischievous than he taketh him to be, and as I know by experience." Having thus given an honourable reception to the envoy, he secretly called the nurse to him, and examined her very mi-

nutely with regard to these transactions. The nurse having heard of the happy change in Sicily, and having learnt that Arrighetto was still living, now divested herself of all her former fears, and related every thing as it had happened, and her reason for having so long concealed the truth. Messer Gasparino finding the story of the nurse to correspond with the account of Conrad's envoy, began to think the narrative true, and making all further search into the affair that his ingenuity could suggest, and finding every thing to corroborate the story, and moreover, reproaching himself for his hard usage of the boy, and knowing the high station which Arrighetto formerly held, and desiring to make him every reparation in his power, he gave him his only daughter, a beautiful girl of fifteen years of age, with a bountiful and honourable dower in marriage. After some days feasting, he went on board a well armed galley, with the exiled youth, his daughter, the envoy, and the nurse, and sailed to Lerici, where they were received by Conrad, whose castle was not far from thence, and who conducted them to share in the grand entertainment. But the joy of the mother having her second son thus restored to her, the meeting of the two brothers, the garrulous felicity of the old nurse, and the many congratulations

paid to Gasparino and his daughter, and to Conrad, and his lady and daughter, I have not words to describe, and must leave it to yourselves to imagine. To complete this universal joy, God, who is a bountiful giver when he beginneth, added the long wished-for tidings concerning the life and good estate of Arrighetto Capece; for in the midst of the feast, when all the noble guests were seated at table, they were agreeably surprised with the return of the envoy to Sicily. He informed them that at the time of the late tumult the people ran to the castle, where Arrighetto was imprisoned by King Charles, and in a rage slew the guards, and set Arrighetto at liberty, and knowing him to be implacably hostile to the king, they placed him at the head of their forces, to assist in expelling and chasing out the French. That by this means he stood high in favor with the new king, who restored him to his honors and estates, and gave him a situation of high authority. He added that he himself had been received by Arrighetto with the highest honors; and that there were the greatest rejoicings in his house on hearing of his wife's and children's safety, of whom he had never heard since the hour of his imprisonment; and he moreover informed them that a fast-sailing bark was on its way thither, with a

company of noble gentlemen from Arrighetto. On this there was a general rejoicing, and Conrad and his friends went out to meet the gentlemen, and invited them to partake of their entertainment. When they arrived, they recognized, to their great delight, Madonna Beritola and Geoffrey, and before sitting down to table, they saluted and returned their thanks to Conrad and his lady, on the part of Arrighetto, for the honor done to his wife and son, desiring them to command Arrighetto in every thing in his power. Then turning to Messer Gasparino, (whose liberal favors came unlooked for) they assured him that when Arrighetto should hear of his kindness to the exiled youth, he, too, would receive as ample a testimony of his gratitude. After Conrad had held these rejoicings for several days, time seemed to call on Madonna Beritola and Geoffrey and the others to depart. Bidding adieu, therefore, with many tears, to Conrad and his lady and to Messer Gasparino, they embarked on board the galley and set sail, and having a prosperous wind, soon reached Sicily. Madonna Beritola and her sons and their ladies were joyfully met by Arrighetto at Palermo, where they long lived happy and united, frequently returning thanks to God for the many mercies received at his hands.

SECOND DAY, NOVELLA VIII.

At the time when the Roman Empire passed from the French to the Germans, great dissensions arose between the two nations, which ultimately led to an exasperated and long continued war. It was during this period that the King of France and his son called together their friends and confederates, and assembled their forces in order to protect their dominions, and march against the common enemy. But before they set out on their expedition, they thought it incumbent on them to appoint a suitable governor of the kingdom in their absence, and knowing from experience the Count of Angiers to be a man of singular talents, as well as of undoubted loyalty; and although a man skilled in military affairs, yet, from his habits of life, not calculated to endure the fatigues of war; they appointed him viceroy of the whole realm of France, and then departed on their enterprize. The count entered on his government with prudence, and conducted every department with talent, at the same time consulting on every occasion the queen and her fair daughter-in-law, whom, although they were left under his care, he still consi-

dered as his superiors, and treated them with honour and respect. The Count of Angiers was a man of handsome person, and as affable and agreeable, and as polished in manners as any man of his time. Soon after the departure of the King of France and his son, the wife of the count died, leaving to her husband two young children, a boy and a girl. The count being in the habit of frequenting the court, and often consulting the queen and her daughter-in-law on the affairs of the kingdom, it happened that the daughter-in-law fixed her eyes on the count, and, smitten by his handsome person and agreeable manners, fell deeply in love with him; and being one day alone, but seeing a favourable occasion for her to discover her attachment, she sent for him as if to converse with him on some indifferent subject. The count, whose thoughts were far from conjecturing any thing of her real intentions, repaired to her without delay. He found her quite alone in her apartment, and, requesting more than once to know the object of her wishes, since she was quite silent, although he had come at her request, she at last, trembling and weeping, and with incoherent words, discovered her passion to him. The count, who was one of the most loyal of cavaliers, immediately comprehended her, solemnly declaring, that he would

suffer the most ignominious death, rather than crouch to the dishonour of his lord, either in his own person or that of another. Upon this declaration, the lady's affection was suddenly turned into the most violent and implacable hate. "Basest of men," she exclaimed, "and dare you thus despise my love? But since you doom me to death, you shall yourself share the like fate;" and at the same moment she began to tear her hair, and cry out for help as a woman in the deepest distress, declaring that the count had attempted her honour. When the count saw this sudden turn, though supported by his conscious integrity, he yet feared the malice of his enemies at court, and judging that more belief would be attached to the calumnious report of the lady, than to his own asseverations of innocence, he instantly left the apartment, and, rushing out of the palace, fled to his own house, where, without a moment's delay, he placed his two children on a horse, and mounting another himself, he fled in all possible haste to Calais. The cries of the lady brought many persons of the household to her assistance, and when they heard the cause of her pretended distress, they gave full credit to her story, knowing the access which the count at all times possessed to the royal apartments. The enraged populace immediately ran to the count's house to seize his

person, but not finding him, they plundered the house, and then razed it to the ground. The intelligence of the count's supposed treachery soon reached the ears of the king and his son, who, in their exasperation, sentenced the count and his children to perpetual banishment, promising a great reward to whosoever would take him alive or dead. The count grieving over his unhappy lot, which had, notwithstanding his innocence, driven him forth as a fugitive, arrived without being recognised at Calais, passed over to England in all haste, and, when he had reached London, gave his two young children the strictest injunctions with regard to two things; first, that they should endure their poor condition, into which they were unfortunately cast, without a murmur, and secondly, that they should take the greatest care not to discover to any person whence they came, or whose children they were, if they had any regard to their lives. One of the children was a son, called Luigi, of about nine years old, the other a daughter of the name of Violante, of perhaps seven years of age; and notwithstanding their tender years, they fully understood the advice of their father, and resolved to act upon it. The better to conceal their origin, the count gave his son the name of Perotto, and his daughter he called Gianetta, and under these

circumstances they began to ask charity like poor foreigners in the streets of London. It happened one morning, as they were standing at a church-door, that the lady of one of the marshals of the king, as she was coming out of church, saw the count and his two children begging alms. She asked him whence he came, and whether or not the children were his own. To this he replied, that he was of Picardy, and that, through the misconduct of his eldest son, he was obliged to leave his country with these his two younger children. The lady, who was of a compassionate disposition, fixed her eyes on the daughter, who attracted her notice, as she was beautiful, and of an agreeable and engaging appearance; and, addressing the count, she said, "Honest man, if you be content, you may leave your daughter in my hands, for her appearance pleases me very much, and if she grows up a handsome woman, when she becomes marriageable, I will bestow her in an advantageous manner." This request was highly gratifying to the count, and he instantly expressed his assent, and with many tears delivered his daughter to the lady, entreating her tender care of her. Having thus satisfactorily disposed of his daughter to a lady of rank, he resolved to remain no longer in London, and, begging his way, he tra-

versed England, and arrived in Wales, not without great fatigue, unaccustomed as he was to travel on foot. Here he found another of the marshals of the king, who lived in great state, and had a numerous family; and the count and his son often repaired to his court to ask alms. It chanced that the son of the marshal, and other children of the nobility, were accustomed to exercise themselves in youthful sports, as leaping and running. Perotto occasionally mingled with them, and excelled them all in so surprising a manner, that he at last excited the admiration of the marshal, who inquired whose son he was. He was informed that he was the son of a poor man, who came to the gates to beg his bread. Upon this the marshal sent for him, and asked his son from him. The count, though not without some struggles of affection, yielded his consent, and having now disposed of both his children, resolved to remain no longer in England, but passed over to Ireland, and, coming to Stamford, engaged himself in the service of a nobleman of the country, engaging to fulfil all the duties of a groom, and in that condition, without being discovered, he continued for a long period in a state of hard service. Violante, now called Gianetta, under the care of the lady in London, increased in beauty as she grew in years,

and was held in extraordinary favour by the lady and her husband, and their household, and by all that saw her; nor were there any who observed her carriage and manners, who did not consider her deserving of the highest honours that fortune could bestow on her. But the lady who had adopted her, knowing nothing more of her birth than what she learnt from her father, intended to dispose of her in a reputable manner, agreeable to what she considered her rank in life. But God, the just disposer of merit, who knew her worth, and how innocently she was suffering, ordered it otherwise, and did not allow her to fall to the lot of an ignoble husband. The lady, with whom Gianetta lived, had by her husband an only son, who was extremely beloved both by his father and mother, and deservedly so from his handsome person, and many virtues, and manly accomplishments. This son was about six years older than Gianetta, and seeing her so beautiful and engaging, became deeply enamoured of her; but, because he believed her to be of low birth, he not only did not dare to ask her in marriage from his father and mother, but fearing to be reproved for fixing his affections so much beneath him, he wholly concealed his passion. This circumstance increased it more than if he had made it known, and labouring long under

this concealment, he at length fell sick. The most eminent physicians were called to his assistance, and none of them being able to discover the cause of his malady, they all seemed to despair of his recovery. Both his parents on this were overwhelmed with grief, and with supplications and tears entreated him to make known the cause of his malady; to which he only replied by his sighs, or his assurance that he was gradually wasting away. Now it chanced that, as a young but skilful physician was one day seated by him feeling his pulse, Gianetta, who out of regard to his mother, attended on him with great assiduity, for some cause or other entered the chamber where the young man lay. Her presence, though she was silent, suddenly increased the flame of love in the young man's breast, so that his pulse began to beat faster than before, which the physician immediately perceiving, was not a little surprised, and waited to see how long the increased pulsation would last. Gianetta had no sooner left the chamber, than the pulse fell to its usual state, and the physician now concluded that he had discovered the cause of his malady. After a little time had elapsed, he desired Gianetta might be sent for again into the room, under a pretence of speaking with her. She instantly returned, and on her appearance the pulse of the

young man again increased, and fell again on her leaving the room. The physician now thinking that he had full confirmation of his suspicions, arose, and taking the father and mother apart, thus addressed them : " The recovery of your son, I may tell you, is not in the power of physicians, but is wholly in the hands of your fair maid Gianetta, with whom, I have by indubitable signs discovered, he is passionately in love, although, as far as I can judge, she is herself wholly ignorant of it. You now know how to act, and must judge how far his life is dear to you." The nobleman and his lady on hearing this were greatly rejoiced, inasmuch as there now seemed to be a way left to preserve his life, though they were disconcerted to find the remedy could only be supplied by bestowing Gianetta in marriage on their son. As soon as the physician departed, the lady repaired to her sick son, and addressing him, said, " My dear son, I did not think that you would ever have concealed from me any of your wishes or desires, more particularly when that concealment endangers your very life; since you ought to be well assured, that there is nothing in the world in my power that I would not do for you : but though you have had no regard for me or yourself, yet God has extended his compassion to us, and in order to save your life, has miracu-

lously discovered to me the cause of your disease, which is no other than the passionate love you bear to some young maid or other, whoever she may be. Therefore, my dear son, do not further conceal your love from me, but discover to me openly all your secret thoughts, and cast off the melancholy and despair which have seized on you, and if I do not find means for you to obtain your wishes, set me down as the most cruel of mothers." The young man, on hearing these words from his mother, was at first abashed; but when he recovered himself, he said, "Madam, I will indeed not only not deny that your surmises are true, but I will make a full confession to you, in the hope that you will be able to fulfil your promise, and restore me to health." The lady having again assured him of her utmost endeavours to assist him, he thus continued: "You must know then, Madam, that the exalted beauty, and enchanting manners of our Gianetta, have taken entire possession of my heart, and that the concealment of my passion, and my fear of discovering it to any one, have in secret preyed on my health, and brought me into the sad condition in which you now see me; and, in truth, if you are not able to fulfil your promise, my life will not be of long continuance." The lady, who was highly comforted at this declaration,

replied smiling, "Alas, my son, why have you endangered your life from a cause like this? Be comforted, and leave your recovery to me." The mother now related all that had past to her husband, and although the circumstance grieved them not a little, they mutually agreed to marry Gianetta to their son, chusing rather to preserve their son alive with a wife not suitable to him, than abandon him to a lingering death. They then made known their intentions to Gianetta, who blushing gave her consent, and with a thankful heart expressed her gratitude to God for this instance of his goodness; nor did she, on this occasion, assume the merit of her noble birth, but was betrothed as the daughter of a poor man of Picardy. The young man instantly recovered from his sickness, and the nuptials were celebrated with great rejoicings. Perotto in the mean time, who had remained in Wales, had won the favour of his lord, and was become one of the handsomest and most accomplished young men of the island, so that in the jousts and tournaments he bore away the prize on all occasions, and had become everywhere famous under the name of the valiant Perotto of Picardy; and as it had pleased God to bestow a happy fortune on his sister, so he himself was not forgotten, as will appear. A destructive pestilence happened to break

out in the country, which swept away one half of the inhabitants, and the greater part of the survivors fled into distant parts, so that the land appeared almost dépopulated. The marshal and his lady and their son, with many of their relations, fell victims to this mortality, and there remained alive only one daughter of the whole family, and some of the servants, together with Perotto. On the plague subsiding, the damsel, at the solicitations of her surviving friends and the people of the country, gave herself in marriage to Perotto, who was highly esteemed for his valour and accomplishments, and thus made him lord of all the inheritance which had fallen to her; and the King of England hearing at this time of the death of the marshal, and being well acquainted with the character and talents of the valiant Perotto of Picardy, appointed him in the place of the late marshal. Such, in the course of a few years, was the good fortune attending both the children of the Count of Angiers. The eighteenth year was now past since the count fled from Paris, and old age had crept on him apace since he had been in the service of the nobleman in Ireland; but finding himself, from habits of exercise, even more robust than in his youthful and courtly days, he took leave of the master, with whom he had so long lived, and came

over to England in poor condition, and, repairing to the place where he had left Perotto, he found him advanced to high dignities, greatly esteemed, and fair and noble in person. He was greatly rejoiced at this discovery, but would not make himself known until he learned what fate had attended his daughter. He therefore departed for that purpose, and did not stop till he reached London. There he made secret inquiries concerning the lady with whom he had left his child, and at length ascertained that Gianetta was married to her son, at which his joy was unbounded, and he even held all his adversity and suffering as light, since he had found both his children alive and honorably disposed of. Being desirous of seeing his daughter, he repaired to the neighbourhood of her house. He there one day excited the compassion of Giachetto Lamiens (for so the husband of Gianetta was named) who seeing him poor and aged, ordered one of his servants to ask him into the house and give him relief, which the servant cheerfully did. Now Gianetta had by Giachetto several sons, the eldest of whom was not more than eight years of age, and they were the most beautiful and engaging children in the world. They no sooner observed the poor old count eating his meat in the hall, than they flocked around him and

caressed him, as if some hidden power had instructed them that he was their grandsire. The old man returned their caresses, and embraced them in silence; and they became so attached to him, that they refused to quit him and return to their tutor. Gianetta hearing of this came out of her chamber, and threatened to punish the children if they did not obey their master. The children wept bitterly, and declared that they loved the good old man better than their tutor, which excited a smile in Gianetta and her lord. The old count, not as the father of so noble a lady, but as a poor man, now rose to return thanks for his alms, and was scarcely able to suppress his joy at the sight of his daughter. She indeed retained no recollection of him, age and want, and poverty, had so altered him; so that with his white head, and rough beard, and poor apparel, he stood before her as an entire stranger. Finding that the children would not leave the old man, but wept on his attempting to depart, the lady allowed them to remain with him a little time longer. While they were thus playing with the aged Count, the father of Giachetto happened to return home, and being informed by their tutor of what had occurred, observed, as he held Gianetta in contempt, "The brats cannot conceal their origin: they are descend-

ed from beggars on their mother's side, and it is no wonder that they show a predilection for beggars." These words cut the poor old count to the heart, but he suppressed his indignation, and swallowed this reproach as he had done many thousands before. Giachetto had seen the mutual caresses of his children and the old man, and, though not approving of them, yet from his fond love to his children, rather than see them weep, he ordered that the old man should be retained in his service if he were willing, and some employment given him. To this the count replied, that he should remain with pleasure, but that his only qualification was the care of horses, an occupation which he had followed all his life. On this a horse was given to his charge, which he attended to daily, and spent his leisure time in playing with the children. While fortune thus dealt with the Count of Angiers and his children, it happened that the king of France, after many truces with the Germans, died, and was succeeded by his son, whose wife had been the cause of all the count's misfortunes. The new king, when the truce terminated, renewed the war with great vigour, and his relation the king of England despatched a large force to his assistance, under the command of his Marshal Perotto, and of Giachetto Lamieus, the son of his other marshal, the

latter of whom, the brave old count, without being recognised, accompanied to the camp, where he rendered many services by his wise counsel. During this war the French queen fell dangerously ill, and being sensible of the approach of death, and desirous of shewing contrition for her sins, she previously confessed herself to the Archbishop of Rouen, who was in high repute for his sanctity ; and amongst other transgressions she related the grievous wrong the Count of Angiers had received from her, and she was not satisfied with narrating this to the archbishop alone, but related all the circumstances in the presence of the nobility, entreating that the count, if living, should be restored to his dignity and estates, and that if he were dead, his son might succeed to his title and honours ; and soon after this she breathed her last. When this confession was made known to the king, after deeply lamenting the injustice that he had done to the count, he ordered proclamation to be made throughout the camp, and in all parts of his kingdom, that whoever would give intelligence of the Count of Angiers, or his children, should be entitled to a reward of great value, at the same time declaring him innocent of the alleged crime for which he had been banished, as the queen had confessed, and announcing that he intended to in-

vest him with his former, and even greater honours. When the count in his humble station heard this, he went instantly to Giachetto, and entreated him to accompany him to Perotto, in order to reveal to them the intelligence the king sought after. Being then all three assembled, and alone, the count said to Perotto, "Perotto, Giachetto who stands here is husband to your sister, and not having received any dowry with her save her virtue and honour, it is my intention that he alone should receive the royal reward offered by the king. Know then that you are the son of this Count of Angiers, and that the wife of Giachetto is Violante your sister, and that I am the Count of Angiers your father." Perotto on hearing this, and earnestly regarding the count, immediately recognized him, and fell at his feet weeping. He then embraced him, saying, "Welcome a thousand times, my dear and long lost father." Giachetto, when he heard the count's communication, and saw Perotto kneel to his father, was surprised and overwhelmed with joy, but giving full faith to the count's relation, and reproaching himself for the injurious words his father had used to the count, and recollecting his long humiliation, he threw himself at his feet, and humbly implored his pardon for his father's indignities, and his own neglect of him, which the count

courteously granted. After conversing some time on the strange chances of fortune, Perotto and Giachetto wished to clothe the count in habiliments suitable to his rank, but this he would by no means consent to, but desired that Giachetto should first assure himself of the promised reward, and then present him to the king in his servant's habit, in order to touch him with more sensible shame for his rash belief and condemnation. Giachetto therefore, with the count and with Perotto, went before the king, and offered to present to him the count and his children, agreeably to the proclamation, on receiving the promised reward. The king instantly ordered the reward, which was of inestimable value, to be delivered to Giachetto, and desired it might be carried to his tent, and the count and his children rendered in return. Giachetto then turning round, and presenting the aged count who stood by him as his serving man, with Perotto, said, "I here deliver to your majesty the father and the son; the daughter, who is my wife, but who is absent, shall ere long be also presented to you." When the king heard this he steadfastly regarded the count, and notwithstanding the lapse of years, and the great change in his appearance, he recognised his features, and shedding abundance of tears, both of remorse and joy, he raised

him up, as he was then kneeling, and kissed and embraced him, at the same time receiving Perotto in the most friendly manner. He then gave orders that the count should be restored to his honours, and that apparel, servants, and horses, and other things answerable to his high estate, should be speedily provided for him. The king moreover shewed great honour to Giachetto, and desired to be made acquainted with all their past fortunes. When Giachetto had received the royal reward for thus discovering the count and his son, the count calling to him, said, "Take that princely remuneration of the king, and commending me to your unkind father, tell him your children are no beggar's brats, nor basely born by the mother's side." Giachetto returning home with his bountiful reward, soon after brought his wife and mother to Paris, as did Perotto his wife, where in great joy and congratulation they continued a long while with the noble count, who had all his goods and honours restored to him, and fresh favours conferred on him. His sons-in-law then returned home with their wives to England, and left the count with the king at Paris, where he spent the rest of his days in honour and happiness.

FIFTH DAY, NOVELLA I.

IN the island of Cyprus there once lived a nobleman of the name of Aristippus, a man of great wealth and possessions. Fortune favoured him in all things, except in regard to one of his sons, who indeed exceeded all the young men of his own age in stature and beauty of person, but whose mind seemed lost in hopeless idiocy. His true name was Galeso, but as he was not susceptible of any kind of instruction, and could neither by indulgence nor threats be taught any thing, he became, from his gross and deformed speech and brutal manners, the scorn of all who knew him, and was in derision called Cimon, or the Brute. The course of life which he led was a source of great grief to his noble father, who now lost all hopes of his recovery, and in order to avoid having so sad an object always before his eyes, gave orders that he should be carried to one of his farms in the country, and should there reside with the peasants and labourers. Cimon himself was delighted with this change, as a rural life, and the rude and unrestrained conversation of the country people, were preferred by him to the polished manners of the city.

Living thus in a retired village, and amusing himself in rural occupations, it happened that one day about noon, as he was passing through the fields from one farm to another with his staff on his shoulder, he came to a small grove or thicket of trees, one of the most beautiful in the country, and which, it being now the month of May, was in full leaf. When he had passed through this thicket, it came to pass that (as if guided by good fortune) he entered upon a fair meadow, surrounded by trees, on one side of which there was a beautiful and cool fountain, and near it on the soft grass he saw a beautiful damsel asleep, whose graceful form was easily traced through her light and delicate vesture. At her feet reposed two maids and a man, who were her servants. Cimon's steps were suddenly arrested, and leaning on his staff, he paused to gaze upon the lady as if he had never before seen the form of a woman, and without uttering a word, he remained with his eyes fixed on her with the most intent admiration, and in his rugged breast, on which all art and instruction had been exercised in vain, there now awoke a spark, which seemed to whisper to his rude mind that this damsel was the most enchanting being ever seen by human eyes. He then began to count her several beauties, praising her hair, rich as gold, then her forehead, her nose and

mouth, her neck and ears, and above all her delicate bosom; and becoming thus suddenly transformed from a rude clown to an arbiter of beauty, he was seized with a desire to behold her eyes, which were now closed in deep slumbers. His first thoughts were to awake her for that purpose, but she so far excelled in beauty all other women whom he had seen, that he was overawed, and regarded her as more than mortal, and a goddess; and his mind was now so far endued with reason, that he considered divine and celestial things worthy of more respect than terrestrial objects, and on this account he forbore to disturb her, patiently awaiting until she should herself awake, and although the time seemed tedious, he yet had not power to move from the spot. After some little time it happened that the lady, whose name was Iphigenia, awoke before any of her attendants, and looking up, saw, to her great astonishment, Cimon leaning on his staff regarding her. Addressing him by name, "Cimon," she said, "whither art thou wandering, and what seekest thou in the wood?" for Cimon, as well for the beauty of his person and rude manners, as the rank and riches of his father, was known to all the country round. Cimon did not make any reply to the words of Iphigenia, but as soon as he saw her

beautiful eyes open, he gazed on them intently, receiving from them an intense delight which he had never before experienced ; but the young lady seeing him obstinately persist in his admiration, and apprehending some rudeness from him, awakened her servants, and suddenly departing, said : " Adieu, Cimon !" To which Cimon, to her great surprise, replied : " Not so, for I will accompany you : " and notwithstanding the endeavours of the young lady to be rid of him, she could not prevent his attending her until she arrived at her house. From thence he hastened home to his father, informing him that he was resolved to remain no longer in the country ; which intelligence was very displeasing to the father, yet he consented to his wishes, waiting to see his motives for this sudden change. Cimon being now pierced to the heart, a heart which had been hitherto proof to all human sympathy, by the beauty of Iphigenia, in a very short time excited great amazement in his father and kindred, and all that knew him, by the unlooked-for alteration in the temper of his mind. He requested in the first place that he might be habited and treated as his brothers were, to which his father gladly consented. He then sought the society of young and gallant men of his own years, adopting in every respect the manners of a gentleman.

Devoting himself to learning, he soon became well instructed in philosophy; and soon afterwards (love to Iphigenia being the sole cause of this happy change) not only was his harsh and rude voice modulated to the expressions of polished life, but he became enamoured of music, and sang and played with skill, and at the same time excelled in riding, and in all martial exercises, as he was naturally possessed of great strength and courage. To be brief, he had not yet finished the fourth year from the day of his first falling in love, when he became the most accomplished cavalier both in learning and manners, that was to be found in the island of Cyprus. Cimon, though loving Iphigenia to such excess, was, as young men in his situation often are, not a little capricious; but his father considering that his passion had wrought this wonderful change in him, patiently bore his humours, in the hopes of contributing to his happiness. He could not however prevail on him to assume his proper name of Galeo, for recollecting that Iphigenia had addressed him by his usual appellation, he persisted in retaining the name of Cimon. Cimon wishing now to crown his desires, made many petitions to Cipseus the father of Iphigenia, to bestow her on him in marriage; but her father replied, that he had already betrothed her

to Pasimunda, a nobleman of Rhodes, with whom he was bound to keep his promise, and the period agreed on for the nuptials being now arrived, and the intended husband having sent for his bride, Cimon said to himself: "Now is the time, Iphigenia, to prove my honourable passion. Through love to thee I am raised to the dignity of a man, and if I can possess thee, I do not doubt that I shall be happier than an immortal, and I am resolved to make thee my own, or die in the attempt." Acting in conformity to this resolution, he secretly prevailed on some young men of rank, his friends, to assist him in his enterprize, and preparing with great secrecy an armed vessel, with every requisite for a naval fight, he put to sea, and awaited the sailing of the ship on board of which Iphigenia was to embark for Rhodes. In the course of a few days, after an honourable entertainment had been given by her father to the friends of her intended husband, the vessel, on receiving Iphigenia, set sail and directed her course to Rhodes. Cimon, who was so vigilant that he could not close his eyes in sleep, intercepted them the next day with his vessel of war, and called from the deck of his own ship to those on board the vessel of Iphigenia, to stay their course and strike their sails, or expect to be sunk in the sea. The adversaries of Cimon

were not to be daunted by words, and immediately stood on their defence, upon which Cimon ordered the grappling irons to be brought, with which he firmly grappled the Rhodian ship, and leaping on board with his drawn sword, and with the fury of a lion, he dispersed the crew, who in a panic threw down their arms, and with one voice confessed themselves his prisoners. Cimon then addressing them, said: "Young men, it is neither a desire of booty nor enmity to you that has induced me to sail out of Cyprus and attack you thus in the open sea. All my desire is that you yield up the lady you have on board, who is all the world to me, and you may then pursue your voyage; for not being able to obtain her from her father in an amicable manner, I have been thus compelled to appear as an enemy, to rescue her from the hands of Pasimunda. Deliver her then up to me, and depart in peace." The young men, from force rather than compliance, then surrendered Iphigenia weeping to Cimon, who seeing her tears, said: "Noble lady, do not alarm yourself. I am no other than your faithful Cimon, who for the long affection I have borne you, deserve much more than Pasimunda to possess you." Then carrying her on board his own ship, he introduced her to his companions, and allowed the Rhodians to depart.

without further molestation. Cimon's happiness being now complete in the seizure of so noble a prey, after having devoted some time to console Iphigenia, who still sat weeping, he held a council with his friends, when they resolved not to return immediately to Cyprus, but to direct their course to Crete, where most of them, but particularly Cimon, having many relations and friends, they hoped to be favourably received, and to place Iphigenia in safety. They had however scarcely resolved on this plan, when fortune, who had before been so kind to Cimon in giving him possession of his beloved Iphigenia, with her usual inconstancy, suddenly changed the rapture of the enamoured youth into the deepest sorrow; for four hours were not yet completed since the departure of the Rhodians, when dark night surprised them as Cimon was conversing with his fair mistress; and a furious tempest arose with contrary winds, obscuring the sky to such a degree that the mariners could scarcely see to work the ship. It would be impossible to describe the grief of Cimon, for it now seemed to him that the gods had granted his wishes only to the end that he should die in greater affliction; losing both his life and his love at the same time. His friends likewise were not less sensible to their misfortune; but above all Iphigenia, who ter-

rified at the raging sea, wept bitterly, reproaching Cimon for his violent passion, and affirming that so dreadful a tempest could only arise from the anger of the gods, who would not permit him to possess her against their will, and thus punished his presumption by dooming him to see her perish miserably. Amidst these bitter lamentations, the storm increasing more and more, the mariners, being ignorant of their course, were, unknown to themselves, carried to the island of Rhodes, and being eager to save their lives, they endeavoured to gain the first land that presented itself to them. In this fortune favoured them, and carried them into a small sheltered bay, in which the Rhodian ship boarded by Cimon had just before taken refuge. They were however not aware that they were driven on the island of Rhodes, until the next morning, when, the storm subsiding, they saw themselves at little more than an arrow's flight distant from the ship which they had encountered the day before. Cimon became not a little alarmed at this circumstance, and fearing, what in fact afterwards befel him, he commanded every effort to be made to escape from the island, and leave it to fortune to carry them whither she pleased, since it was impossible that they could fall into a greater danger. The mariners exerted

their skill and force to the utmost, but were unable to stir, as the violence of the wind would not allow them to escape out of the bay, and they were, notwithstanding all their endeavours, at last driven on shore, and instantly recognized by the Rhodians. A party of the latter immediately ran to the neighbouring town, and informed some young noblemen of Rhodes of the event, narrating how Cimon had seized upon Iphigenia, and carried her on board his ship, and had been subsequently driven on shore in the island. On hearing this intelligence, the young noblemen, accompanied by many men of the city, ran with all speed to the sea-coast, and meeting with Cimon and his comrades, who were hastening into the woods for safety, they made them all prisoners, and carried them, together with Iphigenia, to the city. No sooner had they arrived there than Lysimachus, who was that year chief magistrate of the Rhodians, with a large body of armed men, immediately led Cimon and his friends to prison, at the moment that Pasimunda, whom these tidings had just reached, was making his complaints to the senate. In this unhappy manner the unfortunate and enamoured Cimon lost his Iphigenia almost as soon as he had won her, his love being only poorly requited with a single kiss. Iphigenia met with a kind re-

ception from the noble ladies of Rhodes, who endeavoured to comfort her for the misfortune of her being seized by Cimon, and the fatigues of her voyage, and with these ladies she remained until the day appointed for her marriage. At the earnest entreaties of several Rhodian gentlemen who were in the ship with Iphigenia, and had their liberty given them by Cimon, both Cimon and his companions had their lives spared, although Pasimunda used all his interest to have them put to death. They were nevertheless condemned to perpetual imprisonment, from which Cimon despaired of any deliverance; but as Pasimunda was making preparations for his nuptials with all despatch, fortune, as if repenting of her late injustice to Cimon, prepared a new event to console him in his deep affliction. It happened then that Pasimunda had a brother, younger indeed than himself, but in no wise inferior to him in good qualities. He was called Ormisda, and it had long been expected that he should marry a beautiful and noble young lady of the city called Cassandra, of whom Lysimachus was also violently enamoured, though from one cause or other the marriage had been long delayed. Now Pasimunda wishing to celebrate his nuptials with great magnificence, in order to lessen the expense, was desirous that Ormisda

should be married at the same time; and mentioning it to his brother, he consulted with the parents of the lady, who expressed their consent to the measure. When this reached the ears of Lysimachus, he was disconcerted beyond measure, for he felt assured that if he could prevent Ormisda from marrying her, he should possess her himself. He however dissembled his fears, and began to consider in what way he could obstruct the marriage, but saw no possible mode except that of carrying off Cassandra by force. This appeared an easy matter to him, from his high office in the state, but he deemed it dishonourable to use his power for such an end. After a long deliberation however, his honour gave way to his love, and he resolved, whatever might be the consequence, to possess himself of Cassandra's person; and considering which of his friends could assist him, and of the conduct of his enterprise, he recollected Cimon, whom with his companions he held in imprisonment; and it occurring to him that he could not have a better and more faithful assistant than Cimon in this affair, he commanded him the next evening to be secretly introduced into his chamber, and addressed him in the following manner: "Cimon, as the gods are bountiful and liberal benefactors to men, so do they likewise make proof

of their virtues, that to those whom they find constant and firm in all changes of fortune, they may give the reward of their valour, and crown them agreeably to their merits. Wishing to have experience of thy virtue beyond the bounds of thy father's house, whom I know to be a man abounding in riches, at first by the overruling passion of love elevating thee, as I have heard, from a brutal condition to the dignity of man, they have tried thee with a grievous misfortune, and have now cast thee into prison in order to see if thy mind be still as constant as when fortune favoured thee, by giving thee possession of thy mistress. Wherefore, if thy constancy of mind remains the same as heretofore, the gods can give thee no greater reward than her whom they are now prepared to bestow on thee again, and in order to animate thy courage, I will show thee the means of accomplishing this object. Know then that Pasimunda, who rejoices at thy misfortune, and earnestly endeavours to procure thy death, is making all haste to celebrate his marriage with thy Iphigenia, and thus enjoy the prize which fortune first granted, and afterwards snatched from thee. Now, if thou lovest Iphigenia, as I believe thou dost, it must fill thy soul with affliction, as I know from my own fate, for a similar injury will be offered to

me on the same day by Ormisda, the brother of Pasimunda, who is on the point of robbing me of Cassandra, the sole object of my life and love. And to avoid such injuries, I do not see that fortune has left us any other means than our valour and our swords, with which thou must accomplish the second seizure of thy lady, and I the first of mine. Thou seest then, that if thou wishest to regain not only thy liberty, which, if I judge aright, is only valuable to thee with thy mistress, but also thy mistress herself, the gods, if thou art willing to assist me in my enterprise, will once more place her in thy hands." These words seemed like new life to the despairing Cimon, who thus instantly replied to Lysimachus : " Thou canst not, Lysimachus, have a more faithful and valiant friend than myself, if indeed the reward is to be such as thou sayest. Acquaint me therefore with thy wishes, which shall be executed with courage and despatch." To which Lysimachus replied : " Know then that three days hence the new brides will be claimed by their husbands, and the nuptials celebrated at the house of Pasimunda, when thyself and I, with some of my own friends, will, by favour of the night, enter the house, and bearing off the brides by force in the midst of the solemnity, will carry them to a ship which I have secretly prepared

for the purpose, killing all persons who may oppose us in our enterprise." Cimon expressed himself highly satisfied with this plan, and remained contented in prison, without revealing a word to his comrades, until the expected day arrived. The day of the marriage being come, the nuptials were celebrated with great pomp and magnificence, and Pasimunda's house was filled with joy and festivity. Lysimachus, after having arranged all things, and Cimon and his companions and also his own friends being prepared, and the time being now arrived, he first addressed a few animating words to his people, and then divided them into three parties, one of which he prudently despatched to the harbour, that they might not meet with any interruption in going on board their ship, and making their escape; and with the other two parties he then proceeded to the house of Pasimunda. They suddenly entered the hall, where they found the brides with a numerous company all seated at supper. Rushing forward among the attendants they threw down the tables, and Cimon and Lysimachus, each of them laying hold of his mistress, delivered them into the hands of their followers to be carried on board their ship. The brides and the ladies shrieked, and the whole house was instantly filled with terror and alarm, but Cimon

and Lysimachus and their friends made way for themselves with their drawn swords. As they came to descend the stairs, Pasimunda presented himself with a huge club, and opposed their exit, but Cimon smote him so severe a blow on the head, that he fell dead on the spot. Ormisda running to his brother's aid, was at the same moment slain, and several others besides, by the companions of Lysimachus and Cimon. Leaving the house thus filled with blood, tears, and lamentations, without any further interruption they carried off their brides in triumph. They had no sooner embarked than the shore was crowded with armed men, who came to the rescue of the ladies, but diligently plying their oars, they happily got out to sea, and arriving in Crete, were joyfully received by their relations. They there celebrated their nuptials with great joy and festivity, and thus reaped the reward of their love and courage. Cyprus and Rhodes were long disturbed by this affair, but in the end, by the intervention of noble friends and kindred, and after the lapse of some time, Cimon found the happy means to return home to Cyprus with Iphigenia, and Lysimachus carried his beloved Cassandra to Rhodes, each leading a long and happy life in his own country.

FIFTH DAY, NOVELLA VIII.

RAVENNA, an ancient city of Romagna, formerly abounded with nobility and gentry, among whom was a young man of the name of Anastasio, descended from the family of Honesti, who on the death of his father and an uncle succeeded to great riches. Being yet unmarried, he became enamoured of a daughter of Messer Paolo Traversari, who was of one of the most ancient and noble families in the country. This Anastasio was of a generous and liberal nature, courteous and affable, and hoped by his assiduities to obtain a return of his affection; but all his good qualities seemed rather to retard than advance his wishes, so cruel and relentless was the young lady in her conduct to him, either through a consciousness of her extraordinary beauty, or presuming on her high nobility of birth. Anastasio thus meeting with nothing but disdain, was so wounded by her conduct, that several times through excess of grief he was ready to lay violent hands on himself. The current of his affections was in consequence perverted, and he resolved to requite hate with hate. But it was in vain he formed this resolution, for as

his hopes lessened, his love increased the more. His friends seeing him persevere in this fruitless passion, and at the same time consuming his means of life, in order to save him from ruin, advised him to quit the city of Ravenna, and reside in some other place, where he might surmount his indiscreet passion, and repair his injured fortunes. Anastasio for a long time resisted this counsel, but he was in the end so earnestly pressed to it, that he consented to comply with their wishes, and making great preparations, as if for a journey to France or Spain, or some other distant country, he one morning mounted his horse, and accompanied by some few of his intimate friends, departed from Ravenna, and proceeded to a retired country place, three or four miles distant from the city, called Chiassi. He there, on the green sward, erected tents and pavilions; and told his friends who accompanied him that he meant to make that spot his future residence, and that after their return to Ravenna they might visit him as often as they pleased. Anastasio now commenced a joyful life, entertaining his friends at dinners and suppers in the most agreeable manner. Now it came to pass that one day, about the beginning of the month of May, when the season was mild and serene, the cruelty of his mistress recurred to his remembrance,

and he went forth to indulge in a solitary walk, desiring his servants to leave him free, and not interrupt his meditations, and in this frame of mind he continued his walk, until at some distance he entered a grove of pine trees. It was now about the ninth hour of the day, and forgetful of his dinner hour, he had wandered nearly to the centre of the pine wood, when the shrieks of a woman in distress suddenly burst upon his ear. Starting from his day-dreams he gazed earnestly around, and out of a little thicket of underwood and briers, he saw a young damsel running towards him, her hair dishevelled, and her fair skin rent and torn with the thorns and brambles, and she shrieking and crying out for mercy. At her side ran two bloodhounds, fierce and swift of foot, that ever and anon inflicted grievous wounds on her trembling limbs, and behind in full pursuit on a black courser, came a knight of a dark complexion, with a furious countenance and a drawn sword in his hand, upbraiding her in outrageous language, and threatening to kill her. Anastasio beheld this strange vision in amaze, but compassion for the wretched victim soon overcame his fear, and he ran to save her from a death so full of anguish and horror; but being all unarmed he snatched up the huge bough of a pine, and raising

it, rushed forward to check the dogs and the knight in their infuriate chase. The knight seeing him thus prepared for resistance, called out to him from a distance: "Anastasio, do not trouble thyself; but let these dogs and me punish this wicked woman as she deserves;" and, in saying these words, the dogs fastened on the lady, and held her until the knight reached her, and alighted from his horse. Anastasio advancing to him said: "I know not who thou art, although thou hast addressed me by name, but whoever thou be, I tell thee that thou art a recreant knight, armed as thou art, thus to attack an innocent and helpless woman, chasing her with thy dogs as if she were a wild beast of the forest; therefore defend thyself, for I will protect her at the risk of my life." "Anastasio," said the knight, "Forbear, and listen! Be it known to thee that I was of the same country as thyself, and that thou wert yet an infant boy, when I, who was called Messer Guido de gli Anas-taghi, became more enamoured of this woman than even thou art at this moment of the daughter of Traversari; but her disdain and cruelty so preyed on my spirits, that at length, in a moment of despair, I slew myself with this sword thou now seest in my hand; for which rash deed I am doomed to eternal punishment; and she rejoicing beyond measure in

my unhappy death, died shortly after me, and for the pleasure she took in my torments, and dying unrepentant, had the like sentence of condemnation passed on her; and it was decreed as a punishment to us both, that she should flee before me in the manner thou hast just now seen, and that I, who loved her so fondly whilst living, should pursue her as my deadly enemy, and not like a woman of whom I was deeply enamoured; and so often as I can overtake her, I am bound to kill her with this sword, the same weapon wherewith I slew myself. I am then enjoined to cut open her body and tear out her heart, as now thou seest me do, and give it to my hounds to be devoured. After a little space of time, such is the appointment of heaven, she re-assumes her life, as if she had not been dead, and falling again to the same kind of flight, I with my hounds am again to follow her without respite or intermission. Every Friday, and precisely at this hour, her course is through this forest, where she suffers the just punishment inflicted on her. Nor do we rest any of the other days of the week, but are appointed unto other places where she disdainfully executed her malice against me, who from being her passionate lover, am ordained to be her endless enemy, and to pursue her in this manner for as many years as she

exercised months of cruelty towards me. Hinder me not, therefore, in being the executor of divine justice, for all thy interposition is vain, in seeking to remit the just vengeance of heaven." When Anastasio heard these words, his hair bristled on his head with terror, and he stepped back aghast to suffer the knight to do what was enjoined. The hapless fugitive was then seized on by the two bloodhounds, and the ghastly knight, in spite of her cries for mercy, rushed on her in fury, and with his drawn sword pierced her breast, and drawing forth her heart, threw it to his dogs, which greedily devoured it. A little space after, the damsel (as forgetful of the punishment inflicted on her) again started up suddenly, running in affright towards the sea-shore, the hounds swiftly pursuing her, and followed by the knight, as soon as he had again mounted his steed, so that Anastasio had soon lost sight of them, and could not guess what had become of them. Reflecting for a space on what he had heard and seen, he stood still for a time, fear and compassion alternately taking possession of his soul; but after a little reflection it occurred to him that he might turn this event to his own advantage. He therefore, after having carefully marked the spot, returned back to his house, and sending for his relations and friends thus addressed them: "My dear kinsmen and friends, you

have long entreated me to relinquish my love to one whom you deem my mortal enemy, and to renounce my lavish expenses on her behalf, which requests of yours I am now ready to comply with, but upon the condition of your granting me one favour, which is, that on Friday next Messer Paolo Traversari, and his wife and daughter, and all their female relatives, and any other guests you may choose to bring with you, will vouchsafe to accept a dinner here with me, when you shall be acquainted more at large with my reason for making this request." This appeared to his friends not very difficult for them to accomplish, and on their return to Ravenna they invited such persons as Anastasio had named, and although they found it somewhat difficult to obtain the company of the young lady whom Anastasio so dearly loved, yet the other ladies at length prevailed on her to accompany them. Anastasio had provided a most magnificent dinner, and the tables were covered under the pine trees, near the spot where he saw the cruel lady pursued and slain; and he so arranged his guests, that the young lady, his unkind mistress, sate with her face opposite that part of the wood where the dismal spectacle was likely to be seen. The dinner was not yet concluded, when the noise, as of an approaching chase, startled the company, who desirous to know whence the cry proceeded, rose in a body

from table, and looking into the forest, they saw in consternation, the woeful woman, the dogs eagerly pursuing her, and the spectre-knight on horseback, in full career after them with his drawn sword in his hand, cheering his hounds. The chase now approached the company, who all exclaimed against the dogs and the knight, and many of the cavaliers rushed forward to rescue the injured woman. The knight then addressed them as he had before done Anastasio, on which they fell back in terror and amaze; and he then repeated his cruelty in every way as on the former Friday. Most of the ladies present being nearly allied to the unfortunate woman, and likewise to the knight, and remembering well both his love and death, shed abundance of tears; and when the tragic scene was over, and the lady and knight had vanished from their sight, all that had seen this occurrence fell into a diversity of opinions on the meaning of the vision. But the young maid whom Anastasio loved was more surprised and terrified than any of the ladies, apprehending that the moral of this dismal spectacle bore a much nearer application to her than to any other person in company. She now called to mind how unkind and cruel she had shewn herself to Anastasio, not less so than the other lady had formerly done to her lover;

and she imagined she already heard the bloodhounds at her heels, and saw the sword drawn to mangle her body. This fear so far increased on her, that to avoid the like cruel fate, she studied to change her hatred into love, which at length she fully accomplished, and secretly sent a faithful maid of her own to Anastasio, to entreat him to come to see her, as she was determined to return his honorable affections. Anastasio replied, that he joyfully accepted her message, and desired no higher happiness than to receive her as his wife in honorable marriage, as she had herself proposed. The maid, well knowing that he could not be more desirous of the match than her mistress, made answer in her name, that this message would be most welcome to her. The young lady now informed her father and mother that she was willing to become the wife of Anastasio, which so greatly rejoiced them, that upon the Sunday following the marriage was solemnized with all splendor, and Anastasio and his bride lived ever after fondly attached to each other. Nor was the impression of this salutary terror confined to the young lady alone; for it was remarked, that all the ladies of Ravenna, admonished by her example, became thenceforth less unrelenting towards their formerly despised admirers and lovers.

FIFTH DAY, NOVELLA IX.

COPPO DI BORGHESI DOMENICHI, who was of our city, and a man of reverence and authority in his day, and from his virtues and manners, much more than from the nobility of his descent, worthy of everlasting remembrance, being now advanced in years, often took pleasure in the narration of past events, to which his retentive memory and pleasing delivery lent an unusual attraction. Among other interesting events he narrated to us that there once lived in Florence a youth called Federigo, son of Messer Philipppo Alberighi, who for feats of arms and accomplishments was held in higher esteem than any cavalier of his age in Tuscany. This young man became deeply enamoured of a lady called Monna Giovanna, reputed in her time one of the most beautiful and agreeable women in Florence; and in order to win her affections he gave a succession of tournaments, feasts, and banquets, and spared no expense in his entertainments. But this lady, not less discreet than beautiful, paid no regard to all that was done in her honour; nor condescended to notice the author of them. Fe-

derigo thus spending all his property, and acquiring none in return, was soon stripped of his wealth, and became suddenly impoverished, having nothing now remaining but a small farm, on the produce of which he found a bare subsistence ; yet he still retained a favourite falcon, which for her rare qualities was no where to be matched. Being thus unable to live any longer in the city, in the style he was accustomed to, and being more than ever enamoured of the lady, he departed to his little estate in the country, and there, without inviting any one to his house, he amused himself with his falcon, and endured his poverty with tranquil patience. It happened that when Federigo was reduced to this extremity, the husband of Monna Giovanna fell sick, and feeling the approach of death, made his will, leaving his possessions, which were very great, to an only son now growing up, and in the event of the son's death, to Monna Giovanna, whom he dearly loved ; and he had no sooner subscribed his will than he died. Monna Giovanna having thus become a widow, went, according to the custom of our ladies, to pass her year of mourning in retirement, removing to one of her estates very near to the farm of Federigo. Hereupon it happened that her son was accustomed to visit Federigo, and taking great delight in hawks and dogs, and having

often seen Federigo's falcon, he became wonderfully fond of it, and ardently longed to possess it, but did not venture to ask for it, as he well knew how dear it was to its owner. Within a short time after this the boy fell sick. His mother, who had no other child, and loved him to excess, stood over him the whole day to tend and comfort him, often asking him and entreating him to tell her if there were any thing in the world he desired, as if it were possible to procure it he should have it. The youth, after a repetition of these questions, at length said, "My dear mother, if you could by any means procure me Federigo's falcon, I think I should recover from my sickness." The lady hearing a request so far out of her power, began to consider what she might do to gratify her son's wish. She knew that Federigo had long loved her, but had never received from her so much as a single glance in return. How then, (she reflected,) shall I send or go to beg this falcon, which from all I hear is the best bird that ever flew, and moreover is now Federigo's sole maintenance; and how can I be guilty of so great a rudeness as to deprive a gentleman, who has no other pleasure remaining, of this his only recreation? Thus troubled in her thoughts she knew not what to reply to her son. Her maternal love however at last prevailed,

and she determined to attempt to gratify his wishes, but resolved not to send, but to go herself to Federigo. She then said to her son, "My dear son, be comforted, and get well, for I promise you that the first thing in the morning, I will go myself for the falcon, and bring it to you." This promise brought a beam of joy into the boy's countenance, and the same day he shewed evident signs of amendment. The next morning Monna Giovanna, taking with her another lady as a companion, proceeded to Federigo's humble habitation, and inquired for him. As it happened not to be a day fit for hawking, he was in his garden, and desired one of his people to go to the gate. He was beyond measure surprised when he heard that Monna Giovanna was asking for him, and ran in great joy to meet her. As soon as she saw him approach she gracefully moved to meet him, and respectfully saluting him, said, "Federigo, I am come to recompence you in some sort for the evil you have received at my hands, at a time when you loved me more than was wise on your part, and the recompence I intend is to make myself and my companion your guests at dinner to-day." To which Federigo with great humility replied, "Alas! Madam, I do not recollect to have received any evil at your hands, but so much good, that if it were ever

in my power, I should be happy, for the love I have borne you, and more so for the honour of this visit, to expend my fortune a second time in your honour ;" and thus speaking, he respectfully led her into his house, and thence conducted her into his garden, and there, not having any other person to introduce her to, said, " Madam, this good woman, the wife of my husbandman, will wait on you whilst I prepare our table." Living in extreme poverty, Federigo was seldom in a state to receive any one in his house, and this morning being less prepared than usual, and finding nothing to shew respect to a lady, in whose honour he had entertained such numbers of people, he was grieved beyond measure, and stood in great perplexity, inveighing against his evil fortune as a man bereft of his senses, and running hither and thither, and finding neither money nor provision, and the hour being late, and his desire being great to shew the lady some mark of attention, and happening to cast his eyes on his favourite falcon, which was resting on its perch in his chamber, and seeing no other resource, he seized the poor bird, and finding it fat and in good condition, thought it would be a dish worthy of the lady, and without further hesitation he wrung its neck, and giving it to a girl, ordered her to pluck it and place it on the spit, and carefully roast

it. He then spread on his table a napkin of snowy whiteness, one of the few things which yet remained to him of his former possessions, and after some time, with a cheerful aspect, returned into the garden to the lady, and told her that a dinner, the best he could provide, was prepared for her. On this the lady with her companion went and seated themselves at the table, where Federigo with great courtesy waited on them, whilst they unknowingly eat his favourite bird. When they had risen from table, after some agreeable conversation, it seemed to the lady to be now a proper time to make known the purpose of her visit, and turning politely to Federigo, she thus spoke: " Calling to recollection your past life, Federigo, and remembering my reserve, which you perhaps esteemed hard-heartedness and cruelty, I doubt not that you will wonder at my presumption when you learn the object of my visit; but if you now had, or ever had had children, and knew the strength of a parent's affection, I feel assured that you would in some measure pardon me; and though you have none, I who have a dear and beloved son, cannot yet forego the common affections of a mother. I am then by maternal love and duty, compelled to ask of you the gift of a possession, which I know is indeed very dear to you, and justly so, since

your evil fortune has left you no other comfort in your adversity. The gift then I ask is your falcon, which my son is so desirous of possessing, that if I do not obtain it for him, I fear it will so far aggravate the illness under which he labours, that I shall lose him. On this account, therefore, I entreat you, not by the love which you profess for me (by which you ought in no degree to be governed) but by the magnanimity of your character, which is better manifested in a courtesy of this kind than in any other way, that you would do me the favour to bestow it on me, so that by this gift I may be enabled to preserve the life of my dear and only son, and I shall myself be for ever indebted to you." Federigo thus hearing the request of the lady, and seeing it out of his power to gratify her, as he had served his falcon for dinner, began in her presence to weep most bitterly, and became unable to utter a word in reply. The lady supposing that Federigo's grief arose from his affection to his falcon, and his regret to part with it, and expecting a refusal, prepared herself for the worst. "Since the hour, most honoured lady," began Federigo, "that I first fixed my affection on you, I have always found Fortune most perverse and cruel to me, but all her blows I consider light in comparison with the one she has now dealt me, seeing

that you have condescended to visit my house, which when I was rich you would not deign to enter, and entreat me for so small a gift, for she has so contrived that it is not in my power to grant it you, and why it is not you shall briefly hear. When you informed me that you meant to honour me with your company to dinner, considering your rank, and that it was only proper that I should pay you due honour by procuring every delicacy in my power, as is becoming on such occasions, and recollecting the falcon which you now request of me, and its many excellent qualities, I considered it a dish not unworthy to be placed before you, and I therefore this morning served it up to you roasted at dinner, a thing which at the time I considered most opportune, but finding now that you wished to possess the falcon alive for your sick son, my inability to gratify you grieves me so far, that I think I shall never know happiness more." In confirmation of his words he then produced the feathers and beak and talons of the poor bird. Monna Giovanna at this recital reprehended him for killing so fine a falcon for a lady's dinner, at the same time however highly commending in her own mind his magnanimity, which it had not been in the power of fortune to abase. The lady having thus lost all chance of possessing the falcon, and despair-

ing of the recovery of her son, thanked Federigo for the honour done her, and for his intended good will, and departed very much dejected. Her son, either through pining for the falcon, or from his complaint being aggravated by disappointment, died a few days after, to the great grief of his mother. After having for some time indulged her sorrow and tears, her brothers seeing that she was left extremely rich, and was still young, entreated her to marry again. This she was not desirous of doing, but finding herself constantly assailed by their request, and recollecting the noble conduct of Federigo, and this last instance of his magnanimity, in having sacrificed the finest falcon in the world out of respect to her, she said to her brothers, "I should willingly, if it were agreeable to you, remain in my present state, but if you insist that I marry, I will assuredly take no one for my husband but Federigo de gli Alberighi." On which her brothers smiling, replied, "What folly is this! Would you marry a man who is a beggar?" To this she answered, "Brothers, I well know that the matter is as you state it, but I chuse rather a man that hath need of wealth, than wealth that hath need of a man." The brothers seeing her fixed determination, and knowing the genuine worth of Federigo, notwithstanding his poverty, bestowed their sister on him

with all her fortune. Federigo thus unexpectedly found himself united to a beautiful lady whom he had long dearly loved, and passed the remainder of his days in peace and happiness.*

* This story is the *Faucon* of Fontaine. It has been remarked of it "that as a picture of the habitual workings of some one powerful feeling, where the heart reposes almost entirely on itself, without the violent excitement of opposing duties, or untoward circumstances, nothing can come up to the story of Federigo and his falcon."—(*History of Fiction*, vol. ii. p. 296.) The two novels immediately preceding this, are familiarly known to the lovers of poetry in the verse of Dryden, who has founded upon them his tales of *Cimon and Iphigenia*, and *Theodore and Honoria*. The latter story, Mr. Dunlop observes, seems to be the origin of all retributory spectres. It has afforded a congenial subject for the wild and powerful pencil of Fuseli.



Novels of Sacchetti.

FRANCO SACCHETTI.

THE notices relating to the life and character of this distinguished writer are both more numerous and particular than those of most of his contemporaries, so nearly connected with the rise and formation of the language and literature of Italy. His is to be esteemed one of the few bright names connected with the age of Boccaccio, an age which conferred on the prose fiction of Italy what Dante had already conferred on her poetry.

He sprung from the noble family of the Sacchetti, and was born at Florence, about the year 1335. His father was Benci di Uguccione (de' Sacchetti) usually termed *il Buono*, the good, who perceiving his son's decided taste for literary pursuits, permitted him to indulge the poetical vein he early discovered, without reproach or molestation. His excellence in this career, though not of the loftiest kind, was such as to merit the attention of his friends and contemporaries; many of his effusions, and in particular his "*Rime*," being very generally sought after and admired, no less for their pleasing and easy style, than for the depth and pathos of their

sentiments. In his poetry, which has never been printed, he took Petrarch for his model.

His poetical character, indeed, soon rose so high in the public estimation, that he was selected by the senate of Florence, as one of the most approved writers, to compose some lines for an inscription on a grand statue of a lion, placed before the Palagio de' Priori in 1377, and another over the gate of the Udienna de' Signori, as well as in other public places. His superior talents and acquirements becoming further appreciated by his countrymen, he was raised to some of the first offices in the Florentine state, being made one of the members of the Council of Eight, and afterwards of the Priori. In the year 1385 he was likewise chosen, though against his express wishes, ambassador to the republic of Genoa, an appointment which he only avoided by entering upon the office of Podestà of Bibbiena in Casentino, to which he had been elected at the same period. A similar office he exercised in 1392, as chief magistrate of San Miniato, and in 1396, at Faenza, where he rose high in the esteem of Astorre Manfredi, the lord of that city. On his return to his native place in the year 1398, he was made governor of the Florentine provinces in Romagna, and during his residence at Portico, contracted an inti-

macy with Lodovico degli Alidosi, lord of Imola, with Pino degli Ordelaffi di Forli, and with Pietro Gambacorti, lord of Pisa, besides many others of distinguished rank and character. He was also known to the great Boccaccio, by whose example he was first induced to devote his leisure hours to fictitious narrative, and the improvement of his native tongue.

At different periods of his life Sacchetti visited Milan and Genoa; and, most probably with some commercial views, he went as far as Sclavonia. In none of his various employments however did he realize much worldly wealth, and the inconveniences to which he is said sometimes to have been subjected, proved more serious to a delicate habit of body, to which he was liable from early youth.

In his manners he was open and animated, while his conversation is said to have been extremely agreeable and witty. We may gather indeed from his *Rime*, and still more from his *Novelle*, that these latter qualities have justly been attributed to him, though imbued with a species of humour, whose national peculiarities possess little relish for us: a criterion however by which no author ought to be judged.

Sacchetti thrice entered into matrimonial engagements, and had several sons by his first marriage, of

whom we can give no account. The precise period of his decease has never been ascertained, though it is believed to have occurred about the year 1400, in the sixty-fifth year of his age. Besides his "*Novelliero*," consisting of three hundred tales, we have to enumerate among his works a pretty large collection of sonnets, canzoni and capitoli, with many other pieces, as well serious as comic. The most singular, and perhaps the most esteemed among these, are some verses entitled *Cacce*, written in the dithyrambic measure, extremely spirited and pleasing.

From the numerous MS. copies of his tales, it is conjectured that Sacchetti was one of the most favourite novelists of his day. Testimonies to his merit are extremely numerous from the pens of the chief critics of Italy. Crescimbeni ranks him next to Boccaccio, and the learned editors of the corrected copy of the Decameron observe: "We have frequently also availed ourselves of Franco di Benzi Sacchetti, our illustrious fellow-citizen, contemporary with Boccaccio, who though much younger, by following his example, succeeded in acquiring that easy and familiar, rather than polished and laboured style, for which he is remarkable. The simplicity and purity of his language is very apparent in his three hundred *Novellette*, founded chiefly upon historical and familiar incidents, though a few are

to be considered wholly fictitious. From the similarity that exists between their words and language, we perceive that, like Boccaccio, he traces his origin to an early and fortunate age." Nor are the compilers of the Della Cruscan Dictionary less lavish of their approbation, frequently quoting him as an authority for their words; while Tassoni and Borghini make frequent use of him in explaining some of the more ancient words and phrases in the *Novelle Antiche*, entitled the *Novellino*.

The MS. copy of his tales lay for a long period incomplete and neglected, nor was it until 1724 that two hundred and fifty of the three hundred stories were edited by Bottari, from two MSS. preserved in the Laurentian library, the most correct that could at that period be discovered. This edition was printed at Naples, with the date of Florence, "and," observes Mr. Dunlop, "was followed by two impressions, *fac similes* of the former, which can hardly be distinguished from it." Since this publication, eight more of the stories have been added to the two hundred and fifty, many of which however in the MS. are deficient, and there would be no great difficulty in extending them yet nearer to the original number, did not a proper regard for the author's reputation temper in some degree the admiration of his editors.

In regard to the spirit and character of his stories, they are perhaps not so well adapted as those of some less skilful and humorous writers for general perusal, a circumstance which will account for the comparatively small proportion in the following selection. Neither M. Sismondi, in his *Literature of the South*,* nor Mr. Dunlop, in his *View of the Progress of Fiction*, appears nearly so partial to his manner of relation, as most of his Italian commentators. The latter of these observes: "At the present day I fear the tales of Sacchetti will hardly amuse in more favourable circumstances. His work wants that dramatic form which is a principal charm in the *Decameron*, and which can alone bestow unity or connexion on this species of composition. The merit of a pure and easy style is indeed allowed him by all the critics of his own country, and his tales are also regarded by the Italian antiquaries, who frequently avail themselves of his works, as most valuable records of some curious historical facts, and of customs that had fallen into disuse; but their intrinsic merit merely considered as stories, is not great."† These observations applied in a general sense to the novels of Sacchetti, are extremely just, nor will any one who has been at the pains of an exact

* See volume ii. p. 21, of the English translation.

† *History of Fiction*, vol. ii. page 357.

perusal and examination of nearly three hundred of the author's stories feel inclined to dissent from their general truth. Yet we are to consider that so voluminous a novelist as Sacchetti could scarcely fail to produce a few out of so great a number, (and the amount is certainly in the author's favour,) of such a character as to entitle them to an exemption from the censure pronounced by Mr. Dunlop, no less than by M. Sismondi. These will be found to be such as are less tinctured with the peculiarities of his style and humour, whose interest consists rather in the nature of the incidents, than in the facetious attempts, the forced witticisms and repartees, of the author. Still however they are rare gems, which require so much toil in their discovery, and in their separation from the mines of dross in which they are buried, that they will scarcely, such as we have found them, afford the reader amusement at all proportioned to the pains they have cost in the selection. In his *View of the Literature of the South*, M. Sismondi remarks: "Au reste, quelque éloge que l'on fasse de la pureté et de l'élégance de son style, je le trouve plus curieux à consulter sur les mœurs de son temps qu'entraînant par sa gaieté lorsque il croit être le plus plaisant."

FRANCO SACCHETTI.

NOVELLA IV.

MESSER BERNABÒ, lord of Milan, once bestowed a handsome reward upon a certain miller for the somewhat singular reason of having received from the shrewd artificer some very witty and caustic replies. Our said governor, who bore a most cruel and implacable disposition towards all kind of offenders, nevertheless possessed the art of tempering his ferocity, so as to give it an air of real justice.

The case he had here in hand was that of a wealthy abbot, who had been fined by the governor in four florins for his negligent care in the education of two mastiff whelps, entrusted to his spiritual direction, but which had turned out somewhat too cruel and quarrelsome. The covetous father upon this cried out for mercy, to which the governor merely replied, that he must infallibly pay the fine, unless he had the wit to give a satisfactory explanation of four points he should propose to him; which were these: "What distance, father, do you

apprehend it is from hence to heaven? What quantity of water is there in the sea? What do people do in the infernal regions? And fourthly, What may be the value of my person?" The good father hung his head on one side in a reflecting attitude for some time, but at length only uttered a deep sigh, perfectly at a loss what to do. To gain time, however, he begged he might be allowed to return home, to consider these important questions somewhat more maturely. His excellency would only grant him a single day, and moreover made him enter into good security for his speedy return. The priest, in a doleful mood, then measured his steps back again to his abbey, blowing like a broken-winded steed. On his arrival, the first person he met was the jolly miller, who observing his melancholy air, inquired into the nature of his distress and the exhausted state of his breathing. "I may well be out of breath," he exclaimed, "when his excellency has set me no less than four knotty points to solve, which neither the wisdom of Solomon, nor that of the Stagyrte himself, would have been able to unriddle."

"Very likely;" returned the miller, "but if you will trust to me, I will bring you through the scrape at once." "The Lord grant you could," said the

poor abbot, with a pious ejaculation. "Yes, and the Lord and all the saints in heaven will, if you will only let them; that I think I may fairly say."

"If you were really in earnest, and could be as good as your word, Mr. Miller, you might afterwards count upon me in every thing during the whole of your life." "That is saying a good deal too," returned the miller, "but I will give it full credit for the sake of your cloth." "To be sure," said the reverend father; "but how do you propose to get me off the horns of this dilemma? that is the question." "How!" exclaimed the miller in a scornful tone, "Why, I will shave my beard, and take your hood and cloak, and present myself to-morrow morning in your place. Trust me, I will answer his Excellency's questions, whatever they may be; and he shall never find out the difference between us, except it be from the difference in our wits." "The Lord bless thee for an impudent varlet," cried the honest father, "as I hope for salvation, I verily believe thou wilt bring me through! Get thee gone, and rely upon thy impudence; it will appear a thousand years until I hear the result." Having disguised himself in the good abbot's suit, our knight of the white hat accordingly set out for the city early the ensuing day, and soon arriving

at his Excellency's palace, knocked pretty loudly at the door, telling the porter he had brought the requisite answers for his master, which he must deliver by word of mouth.

Hearing who he was, his Excellency ordered the abbot to be brought straightway into his presence, wondering how he had already prepared himself for his task. The false friar with reverence due, accosted his Excellency with a sidling air, having admirably metamorphosed his physiognomy, and imitating the abbot's voice to perfection. With very little ceremony he was required to repeat what he had learned in the way of explanation of the four points in dispute. Expressing his readiness, he was first requested to point out the exact distance between earth and heaven.

"Having considered the matter very maturely," said the miller, "I find there are just thirty-six millions eight hundred and fifty-four miles, seventy-two yards, and twenty-two feet." "You must have measured it very exactly," exclaimed his Excellency; "but how will you prove it is correct?" "How!" retorted the bold miller; "As such matters are always proved; let your Excellency refer it to arbitration, and if it should not be found upon a second measurement exactly what I have stated, hang me up by the

neck, upon the next tree. It seems you want to know next, how much water there is contained in the sea? Now this has cost me a good deal of trouble, for it would neither stand still while I measured it, nor stop from receiving its tributary streams. Yet I have nevertheless compassed the difficulty, and find there are just twenty-five thousand nine hundred and eighty-two millions of vats, seven barrels, seven bottles, and two glasses of water in the sea." "But how have you learned that, Mr. Abbot?" inquired the governor. "Why, if you do not like to believe me," retorted the other, "order the proper vessels to be prepared, and measure it again. If you do not find just as much as I have told you, quarter me alive without any mercy. The third question, I think, you want resolved, is how people contrive to employ themselves in the world below? To this I answer, they do much as we do here; they cut and hack one another until they are weary of such sport; they persecute and they hang one another." "But what are your reasons for this opinion?" "Do you ask me for reasons?" returned the miller; "Why, I spoke with the very man who returned from a tour there, the same from whom the divine Florentine received his account of the infernal government, and the whole of its civil and judicial

polity; but the traveller, I believe, is now dead, and went back again. And if you are not satisfied with my word for the truth of it, I refer you to him, and would advise you to send and see.

“The fourth and last of your questions, concerns the worth of your own respected person; and I tell you it amounts to neither more nor less than two shillings and five pence.”

Upon hearing this, Messer Bernabo rose in a furious passion, crying, “Villain, I will make you eat your words: how, you rogue abbot, am I worth no more than an old rusty pan?”

The poor miller beginning to quake in his shoes, entreated in a somewhat milder tone, that his Excellency would but deign to hear his reasons, saying: “You are aware, my honoured lord, that our great Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, was sold for only thirty pence, and surely you will not be offended at being rated one mark lower.” The moment he heard this answer, the governor was convinced he had no longer the honest abbot to deal with, and eyeing him more narrowly, he perceived him to be of larger dimensions, both in body and mind, than his friend the honest abbot could boast.

“You say very true,” he exclaimed, “but you are not the abbot, friend: at least I have you there.”

The poor miller fearing upon this, that it was all over with him, fell piteously upon his knees, with uplifted hands, confessing it was true, he was only the good father's grinder of corn. He then proceeded to explain the occasion of his appearance in his disguise, for the mere purpose of amusing all parties, but of giving offence to none.

"Then by all the saints in heaven," cried Messer Bernabo, "I swear, since he has made thee abbot, an abbot thou shalt remain. By this sword I confirm his decree, and henceforth he shall serve thee, abbot, as thine honest miller, and cheat thee of thy flour. The proceeds of the monastery are thine, those of the mill shall be his;" and this sentence he strictly enforced,

NOVELLA XXXI.

At the period when the city of Arezzo was under the sway of Bishop Guido, the people of Casentino had occasion to send two ambassadors, requiring of him certain articles they were desirous should be granted them. Having been informed of the particulars of their mission, they were told to hold themselves in readiness for their departure on the ensuing morning. Preparing their luggage in all haste, the two ambassadors accordingly set out on their way; and they had not travelled many miles, before one of them addressing his companion, said, "Do you recollect all the particulars which they informed us of in so hasty a way?" And the other replied, that he feared he hardly did. "But," said his companion, "I relied chiefly upon you;" to which the other rejoined, "And I trusted to you;" while each regarding the other, exclaimed, "We are in a pretty scrape then! What shall we do?" At length the one said, "I will tell you what: let us go on to the next inn, and, perhaps, after a good dinner we shall remember them better: yes, we shall be sure to remember them." "That is well said," added his

companion; and jogging on together, half asleep and half awake, about three o'clock they contrived to reach the first inn. As it was a matter so nearly connected with their embassy, they ordered dinner directly, racking their brains in the mean time, to recover some of the articles they had lost. Having taken their seats at table, they luckily found the wine good; and so it was, that they were more pleased with this circumstance than sorry for the mission they had forgotten. Indeed it was so excellent, that they repeatedly emptied their glasses, toasting all their friends in town, until they became half stupified, so that far from recollecting their embassy after dinner, they were in no condition even to talk about it, and hardly knowing where they were, they both dropped asleep.

On rousing themselves once more, one of them inquired of the other, whether he had yet succeeded? "I know not," was the reply; "but I know that our host's is the best wine I ever drank: the truth is, I have never thought about it since dinner, and now I hardly know where I am." "And I declare it has been the same with me," answered his friend; "the Lord only knows what we shall do! However, we will stay here to-day and to-night, for the night is always favorable to memory; we cannot fail to recollect

the whole." To this the other agreed; and they stayed there the remainder of the day, repeating the experiment of the wine, frequently finding themselves in the clouds, where, however, they found nothing of their mission. The same story was repeated at supper; and they afterwards with difficulty found their way to bed. At breakfast the next morning the inquiry was as vainly repeated, both declaring that they had not so much as dreamed about the matter, and that they had not got the most distant notion of it, having never slept so sound in all their lives. "The devil is in the wine, I think," cried one; "let us mount horse again, and see what that will do; it will come when we are not thinking about it on the road." So they again set out, occasionally asking each other as they went, "Well, have you got it yet?"—"No: have you?"—"Not I indeed." And in this way they journeyed along till they came to Arezzo, where they alighted at one of the first hotels. There they retired into a private room, for the purpose of putting their heads seriously together, as it was quite time to recollect what was their business. But I am sorry to add, it was all in vain; and such was their hopeless condition, that one said, "Come, let us go; and God help us at the worst!" "But will he help us?" said the other.

“What must we say? what do we know about the matter?” “Well, but we must go through with the business; so let us go and do our best.” So trusting to fortune, they requested an audience of the bishop, saying they had some matters of importance to communicate to him; and being introduced into his presence, they made a very low obeisance, and remained silent. Upon this the bishop with great dignity approached them, and taking them by the hand, said, “You are welcome, gentlemen; what tidings of import may you bring?”—Each of the ambassadors now looked at the other, and bowing, said, “Do you speak?”—“No, sir,” was the reply; “Do you speak, sir; I cannot think of it;”—till at length the boldest of the two, addressing the bishop, observed: “We come, my lord, as ambassadors from your poor servants of Casentino, and I can assure your grace, that both those who send us, and we who are sent, are equally devoted to you; but, please your grace, we are all of us men of fact, but of few words: our mission was entrusted to us in haste; and whatever may be the occasion of it, either our assembly must have informed us wrong, or we have, in some way, misunderstood them. Nevertheless we humbly recommend both them and ourselves to your grace’s good offices; though what

possessed them to send us on such a mission, or ourselves to come, we cannot exactly say." The good bishop, like a wise man, only patting them on the shoulder, said, "Well, well, my friends, it is all right; go home, and say to my dear children of Casentino, that I shall always be happy to serve them every way in my power; so much so, that henceforward they need be at no expense in appointing ambassadors to my court; let them only write to me, and I will reply, agreeably to their wishes."

The bishop then taking leave of them, our ambassadors resumed their way, saying as they went, "Let us take care not to fall into the same error on our return." "But," said one, "we cannot easily do that; we have got nothing to remember." "Yet we must have our wits about us," returned the other; "for they will ask what we said in our oration, and what was the reply. For if the good people were to suspect that our embassy, like many others, was all a joke, they would never employ us again; and farewell to our occupation,—it is gone." To this the more politic of the two replied, "Oh, leave that to me; we will continue in office, trust me. I will tell them such a story about the embassy, and what passed on both sides, as would deceive wiser heads than theirs. The bishop shall say such polite things

of them, as shall make them in good humour with themselves for an age to come. I will tell them of the letter, and how he thinks himself highly honored by their alliance." "That is well thought," said the other; "and let us spur along a little, that we may get in time for dinner at the same inn,—you know where." "That is well thought," echoed the other; and mending their pace at the idea of the Frontignac, they soon dismounted, all in a heat, and without waiting for dinner, called out for some of the same wine. "Good sirs," replied the waiter, "we have some better than ever;" and the ambassadors kept him pretty sharply employed in drawing the bottles, until the wine began to get low, and their politic heads somewhat too elevated. Grieved to hear this, these patterns of diplomacy were compelled to mount again, and the next stage or two brought them into the presence of their employers, where, finding it easier to recollect their own lies, than the truths which had been reposed in them, they mystified the good people in such a manner, that they were highly pleased with the success of the embassy. They talked in so bold and lofty a tone of the orations they had delivered, that some of the audience compared them to Tully and Quintilian; and the thanks of the assembly being unanimously voted to them, they

were afterwards promoted to other offices of great honor and emolument. Nor will this appear very extraordinary, if we reflect on the sort of people, of a higher rank than our heroes, whom we every day see entrusted with public missions, and who are about as much suited to their business as a common trooper taken from the ranks; and yet they write long letters, assuring the government that they are busied day and night in the affairs of the nation, and that all the lucky events which fall out are wholly to be imputed to their skill. Did they tell truth, however, they would own that they had as little merit in bringing them about as a cabbage, or any other vegetating substance, though they are richly recompensed, and promoted to the highest honors, in consideration of the ingenious lies and forgeries which they pass upon their countrymen.

NOVELLA XLVIII.

THREE dwelt in the vicinity of Florence, a certain Lapaccio di Geri da Montelupo, a man of simple and singular manners, with whom I was well acquainted in his day. Had any one said to him, "Such a person is dead," and had touched his hand, he would instantly touch him again; and if the informant had taken leave, our hero would run after him, to make himself sure of the efficacy of his touch, which, if he did not succeed in, he would touch the next animal he met. And if he could meet with no one, and find neither dog nor cat, as a last resource he would touch the blade of his own knife. Such indeed was his superstition in this respect, that if he happened to come in contact with a person who had witnessed a death-bed or a funeral, he infallibly held himself for a dead man, until he had succeeded in returning his touch. Was a malefactor taken to execution, a burial or a cross passing along the way, such was our hero's reputation, that every one for the joke's sake would run and touch him, which avoiding with the utmost dread, he now ran from

them, and now after them, making the strangest confusion in the world.

It happened that the Florentine republic fixed upon him to proceed to the election of their Podestà, and, leaving the city during Lent, our hero took his way towards Bologna, thence to Ferrara, and passing on, arrived late in the evening at a gloomy and wet looking place called the Ca Salvadega. Alighting at the inn, and having secured his trunks and horses for fear of the neighbouring gipsies and banditti, no less than the pilgrims who were all gone to rest, he inquired of the host after supper where he was to sleep. The man replied, "You must rest as you best can: go in there, the beds are full of pilgrims, but they are all I have. You may perhaps find a corner somewhere; at least you can try." Poor Lapaccio, half in the dark, went groping along to find a place, but they were all occupied, with the exception of that of an Hungarian, who, having died the day before, lay alone. But our hero not knowing this, for he would have preferred being roasted alive, very innocently took his station at the other side. The deceased gentleman, however, appearing to our hero to take up too much room, the latter very gently requested him to go a little further. But his bedfellow remained still, appearing

to take no notice : upon which, repeating his request, with a slight push, he begged him for charity's sake to make a little more room. Finding all was still, Lapaccio, a little impatiently, cried, " Pray do stir yourself, for a lazy ill-natured clown ! " But he might as well have spoken to the wall. Until, losing all patience, he began to swear, " The devil take the fellow ! Will you move, I say ? " And, as the dead man still took no notice, our hero drawing in his legs, and holding by the bed-post with all his force, launched out both his heels at him, in such a style, as hitting him plump in the ribs, sent him with a terrific fall fairly out of bed. So heavy indeed was it, that our hero said to himself, " Alas, what have I done ! " and turning to the side where the body fell, he said in a milder tone, " Come, get up. You are not hurt, are you ? Get into bed ! "

But his companion permitted him to repeat the request till he was tired ; he would neither get up nor come to bed ; and poor Lapaccio began to be seriously afraid he had done him a mortal injury. Sadly perplexed and frightened, he got up—he looked—he felt at him—and the more he looked, the more he feared that all was indeed over. " Good God," he cried, " what shall I do ? whither shall I go ? alas, I know not. I wish to heavens I had died at Florence,

sooner than come to this hateful place. And if I stay here, I shall be taken to Ferrara, and executed. Oh, what a thought ! Should I go and tell the host ? should I, or should I not ? Nay he will have me hanged to save himself." Remaining the whole of the night in this state of fear and perplexity, he stood like a criminal looking for the halter.

At early dawn the pilgrims all rose and went forth. More dead than alive, Lapaccio also tried to rise, wishing to get away for two reasons, both of which gave him equal torment ; to escape the danger before the host was aware, and to fly from the dead, of which he had such a superstitious horror. So he got out with difficulty, and ordered the groom to saddle the beasts ; then, seeking the host, he counted out the bill, his hands trembling like an aspen all the while.

"Are you cold, friend ?" inquired the host. With a great effort, our hero replied, that it was the marsh fog which affected him. A pilgrim stepped up at this time, saying, he could no where find his scrip in the place he had slept in ; upon which the host taking a light, went to search the chamber where Lapaccio had slept. There he found the Hungarian lying dead at the foot of the bed, and said, "What the devil is all this ; who slept in this bed ?" Our

hero, who stood listening, felt his blood run cold. The pilgrim, pointing to our poor friend, said, "There is the man who slept in that bed, if I mistake not." Lapaccio, looking as if he were already half hanged, took the good host on one side, saying, "For the love of God, sir, listen to me! it is too true that I slept in that bed, and the man would not make room for me, nor lie on his own side; till he at last enraged me to such a degree, that, giving him a great kick, I pitched him out of bed; but I did not think—I am sure I had no intention of killing him. It was very unfortunate; but it is not my fault, I assure you." "What is your name?" said the host; and our hero gave it. "Suppose you could get out of this ugly affair," continued the man, "what would you give?" "I will give what you please," said our hero, "if I can get away from this place; only get me to Florence, and I will reward you well." Observing his simplicity, the compassionate host said, "You unhappy rogue, why did not you look with your candle, before you jumped into bed with a dead Hungarian, who died here yesterday evening?" On hearing this, Lapaccio seemed to recover a little, but not much; for there was no great difference in his opinion, between having his head chopped off, and sleeping with a corpse. At length, muster-

ing a little courage, he said, "In truth, Mr. Host, you are a very facetious gentleman; not to tell me before I went to bed, that you had a dead man lying in the room. If you had informed me of it, you would not have been troubled with my company at all; for I should have proceeded many miles further, rather than have been put into so terrible a fright, that I fear it will be the death of me." The host, who had before insisted upon some compensation, seeing the state our hero was in, and afraid of having him left upon his hands, was glad to become reconciled, and to get rid of him on any terms. Lapaccio then took his leave, hastening away as fast as possible, not without frequently looking behind him to see that the corpse of the Hungarian was not in pursuit, whose physiognomy was scarcely more cadaverous than his own.

In this extreme anxiety, he went to a certain Messer Andreasgio Rosso da Parma, who being now elected Podestà of Florence, Lapaccio returned to that city, reporting that he had fulfilled his commission, by the election of the said Podestà, who had accepted the office. But such was the terror he had experienced, that, soon after his return, he was seized with a violent fever, which brought him nearly to death's door. Indeed it would seem as if fortune

had owed our poor superstitious hero a bitter spite, in fixing upon him, of all others, to place by the side of a dead man, when there had been nothing remarkable in it happening to any one else.

NOVELLA LII.

THERE resided in Florence, not many years ago, a certain Sandro Tornabelli, who had such an extravagant love of money-making, that he was always bent upon hitting some dexterous mark, not scrupling to shoot a long bow upon occasion when it served his end. Now it so happened that the son of a tradesman, with whom he had formerly had dealings, presented a bill against Sandro, being now old, which had been already paid to the youth's father. Indeed our friend Sandro had the receipt, unknown to the young tradesman, who at length sought his redress at law; while the old man laughed in his sleeve, at the idea of his giving himself all this expense and trouble for nothing. Moreover to repay him in his own coin, Sandro thus accosted the officer who had been commissioned to persecute him. "My good friend, Totto Fei, you may perhaps know something of law, but I have a trick worth two of that. The young rogue has promised you twelve florins for your fee, but hark you, sir, the bill has been paid." "Well, but what of that? you must pay again," said Totto Fei, "if you cannot shew it." "I know that, sir,"

interrupted the old gentleman, "but I have the receipt at home." "You have!" cried Totto, quite at a loss. "Yes, I have; but I will tell you how you may save your twelve florins yet. You are poor, and I am not the richest man in the world; so go and get as much out of the youngster as possible for arresting me, then come and take me to prison, and we will divide the money between us. This done, I will bring forth the receipt at the proper time, and we shall see how the young gentleman looks." To which they both agreed.

Indeed the poor bailiff was delighted at the proposal, his condition being none of the best, inasmuch as he had forfeited his right hand on occasion of having perjured himself for the service of an intimate friend, by which he incurred the punishment of a fine of eight pounds, or the loss of a hand. Now he was so poor, that though his friend sent him the money for payment, he resolved rather to keep it, and let the law take its course. Seeing the whole heaped up in silver on the table, he laid his hand by the side of it, and began to calculate, saying, "Which shall I take? which can I afford best to lose? If I part with my hand, I have still another left; but if I let the money go, am I sure of getting as much again? No, I am not; and I should only go about

begging with two hands, with which every body will tell me I might work ; while they may take compassion upon one. Besides I have often seen one-handed gentlemen." And so he stuck to the money, and laid his hand upon the block. I say thus much to shew the excuse this half limb of the law had, for consenting to the old gentleman's plan. Besides Sandro was a reputable citizen, who had borne some of the chief offices in the state, and therefore the myrmidons of the law felt considerable hesitation in sullyng with their profane touch the dignity of his magisterial person. So according to agreement, after three days notice, Totto Fei laid his hand upon the old gentleman's shoulder, as he was returning from the exchange, and taking him straight to the mansion-house of the Podestà, put him into durance for the time being. Notice of this event being sent to the creditor, he came to plead his cause against him, in the usual forms. Our friend Sandro was eyeing Totto Fei through the prison-grating, as had been agreed upon, with no very pleasant looks. He first shook his head and then his fist, as if in high dudgeon ; while Totto applied to the creditor for his sixteen florins, the amount fixed upon for the arrest. In the hearing of old Sandro, who was quite on the alert, the creditor

passed his word for the payment. "But, dear sir," said the bailiff, "pray give me something besides your word; alas, I am in want, and you see how enraged the prisoner is against me; it will certainly cost me my life: he will kill me when he gets out, and what will become of my family?" Saying this, he approached nearer to the prisoner, who cried in a furious voice, "Yes, rascal, I will recompense you, you may depend!" then he whispered in a lower tone, "Has he paid you?" "No," was the reply. "Villain," then continued the old man, in a strain of virulent abuse, "you shall live to rue the day you were born!" "Oh, dear, Oh, dear, what shall I do?" said Totto, "he will infallibly be the death of me. Do, do, good sir, pay me the money, and let me escape alive." "Wait a little," replied the creditor, "you would make one believe oneself the person going to be put up for debt: cannot you wait?" Poor Totto, now bewailing himself more than ever, again approached the grate; and Sandro whispered, "Has he paid you yet?" "Alas, no!" "Oh, you vile wretch then," he cried, "is this the way you use gentlemen, throwing them into prison? but I will make you repent." And such were the diabolical threats he made use of, that at length the creditor, out of mere compassion, began to count out the sixteen florins. "Has

he paid you?" inquired Sandro once more, as he came near the grate. "Yes," answered Totto, "this time he has." "Then let some one go immediately to my house." And on the messenger's return, being brought before the court, the old gentleman said, "There are very pretty rascals in the world, but none like those who insist upon being paid twice over: they well deserve to be hanged. Now, will your worship please to look at this? This, Mr. Podestà, is a receipt which the father of this youth gave me for moneys paid, and the young gentleman has upon this thrown me into prison."

The whole court, in the greatest astonishment, handed about the document, and beheld the creditor overwhelmed with confusion, not knowing what to think or say. At length humbly apologizing to Sandro for his mistake, and the doubts he had entertained of his good faith, he entreated he would forgive him. To this the old gentleman replied, "But you should have known better, young man! Who is to repay me for the slur you have cast on my reputation? However, I am willing to hush up the matter with you and your friends, upon condition of your paying me three hundred florins, when I promise you not to proceed further against you."

This the Podestà compelled him to do; and he

retired out of court, like Ughetta del Asino, with his ears shorn. Such was the subtle and most avaricious nature of old Sandro of Florence, turning the tables even upon his creditor and obliging him to pay instead of being paid. Yet the young man was not a whit to blame: his father had preserved the account, and left no memorandum of its settlement.

NOVELLA CXXIII.

IN the castle of Pietra Santa, belonging to the state of Lucca, there resided a certain castellan of the name of Vitale, who was an honourable man, and stood very well in the world. His wife was lately dead, leaving him a son of about twenty years of age, and two girls from seven to ten years old. The boy understanding his grammar well, was thought entitled to an university education, and sent to study law at Bologna. During his studies there, his father again married, and being pleased from time to time to hear of his son's extraordinary progress, supplied him with books and money, to the value of forty or fifty florins at a time. Now this lessening the income of the house, his father's new wife was by no means pleased with it; and after many sour looks, she began to express her aversion to the plan more openly, saying in the true language of a step-mother, "This is money really thrown away; you may send as much as you please, but you do not know who pockets it all." "Why, my love, what can you mean?" said the fond father; "reflect how much we are ourselves interested in it; for if my son should

happen to become judge or doctor at law, we may consider our fortune made." " Our fortune made, indeed!" returned his wife, " I think you are deceived there; he is a mere dead weight upon you, and will pull you down before long, you will see." Continuing to revile her step-son in this strain, whenever her husband made him a remittance, she was in the habit of repeating her phrase of his being a dead weight upon the family. Such was the extent to which she carried her enmity in this respect, that it at length reached the ears of the young man, together with the appellation she had bestowed upon him. Though he said nothing, the phrase was not lost upon him; and in the course of some months, having made great progress in the civil law, he returned to Pietra Santa, to see his relations. His father, overjoyed to behold him, directly ordered a warm supper to be prepared, in which was included a fine roasted capon, and invited the neighbouring parson to sup with them, who in consideration of his cloth, took his station at the head of the table: next to him sat the father, with his new wife, and then his two daughters, while the young student took his station by himself at a distance. As soon as the capon made its appearance, the step-mother, eyeing him askance with the utmost malignity, began to

whisper to her husband, "Why do not you ask him to cut up the capon in a grammatical style, and you will know if he has learned any thing;" which he did, observing, "As you are going to carve, my son, let us see you do it by rule of grammar."

The youth, who had sense enough to see what was going forward, answered he would do so very willingly; and taking his knife, he cut off the capon's crest, and handed it on a plate to the priest, saying, "As you are our spiritual father, and wear a priest's shaved crown, I present you with the shaved crown of the capon." Then decapitating it, he gave the head to his father, "Being the head of the family, sir, the head is justly your own." He next cut off the bare legs, and handed them to his step-mother: "As it is your business, madam, to go up and down, looking after your household affairs, and this cannot be done without a pair of legs, please to accept them for your share." The wings were then separated, which he very politely handed to his sisters, saying, "As these young ladies ought to fly out of the house, and settle elsewhere as speedily as possible, I am happy to present them with wings to fly away with. For myself," he added, taking the whole of the breast and body of the capon for his share, "as you know I am a *corpo morto*—a dead weight, madam, I rest

satisfied with what is left;" and he proceeded to feast very heartily upon the tenderest parts of the bird. If the lady had before shewn herself offended, she was now almost mad with vexation, murmuring, "The devil give him good of it: do you see what you have done?" she whispered to her husband, "it is all your own doing." Nor were some of the rest of the company much more pleased; in particular the priest, who sat contemplating the capon's crown, as if it might have been a mitre. But before setting out on his return to Bologna, the youth so very humorously explained the meaning of what he had done, that he won the good will of the whole party, not excepting his step-mother, who only wished he might never live to return.

NOVELLA CXXXII.

ABOUT the time that the republic of Florence, with the assistance of its allies, succeeded in depriving the church of Rome of a great part of the Marca, Count Luzio arrived there with more than a thousand lances, and took up his position at Macerata, on the side that goes by the name of the Gate of Santo Salvatore. On the other side was stationed Messer Rinalduccio da Monteverde, lord of Fermo, supporting his position at another gate called Porta del Mercato. On the third day they gave the assault, disputing for the possession of the city. Count Luzio, at the head of his troops, made a breach in the walls near the gate of San Salvatore; in three places, though not without great loss. Now the whole army retiring on the succeeding day into the province of Fermo, it happened one night shortly after, during the third watch, that a large water-course, bursting its boundaries, inundated the roads, obstructing the course of the common sewer, and filling the adjacent houses, for want of another vent. A woman having occasion to go and draw some wine, suddenly found herself half immersed in water, and

crying out loudly for help, many of her neighbours ran down the steps after her, and found themselves surrounded everywhere by water in the roads and houses, without knowing which way to turn. Believing a second deluge was at hand, they all joined in a general chorus, very plainly heard by the watch, who passing it along to the guards, they hastened on their part to rouse the chief magistrates, declaring, that at the Gate of San Salvatore, the people were crying to arms. The magistrates then said, "Listen again: what is really the cry?" The watchman soon answered, "The cry is, that the people are all in." "In!" cried the magistrates, "where, where? it is the enemy—sound the great bell; quick—it is an onset." The guards stationed in the square immediately beat to arms, running to the different entrances with chain-bars, and crying to arms. The whole populace hearing the bell, turned out in mass; supposing the place was assaulted by Count Luzio; and they found the soldiers at their posts, shouting "Who goes there?"—"Who goes here?" and some cried, "Long live Ridolfo!" and others, "We are friends—we are all friends!" Such was the tumult, that nothing could be understood; the people every moment awaiting the attack of the enemy in the square. Some declared that he had already reached

the Church of San Giorgio, and was on his way. But no one arriving, the magistrates at length had the boldness to send out scouts as far as the great gate; and many were those thus sent, who like the crow in the fable, with difficulty found their way back again. Among these was a certain brother Antonio, of the order of his saintly namesake, boldly bearing a shield upon his arm, with a bell-clapper about his neck, which had that day fallen from its noisy appendage. Trying in vain to obtain some tidings, he chanced on his return to fall, like a brave man, upon his own shield; and being almost as big as a giant, he could not contrive to get rid of it, nor even to rise, lying in this situation not far from the square. Now a person was standing at no great distance from the spot, who on hearing the horrible fall, the noise of the shield, and the vain efforts of the poor priest, gave the signal that the enemy was at hand. Upon this a party sallied forth, scouring the way, with loud cries of "Death to the enemy!" and on approaching the place where the friar lay, they exclaimed, "Yield, traitor, yield!" which the good brother answered with "Help! for the Lord's sake, help!" and appearing to entertain no hostile intentions, the party with some difficulty raised him up. They found the poor friar in a piteous plight: he

was shaken to a mummy, and covered with mud; for the handle of his shield coming in contact with his skull-cap in the fall, hooked fast together; it was thus impossible for him to rise without knocking himself to pieces, as he had almost done. Carried back into the presence of the priors, he there related the affair of the great inundation, and how he had nearly fallen a victim to his patriotism; for if the watch had happened to hear the tremendous noise of his fall, they would infallibly have run in upon and despatched him where he lay. As it was, however, he would never more bear a shield in battle, Providence having thus miraculously snatched him from his impending fate: and he vowed in gratitude that he would break it up into firewood on his return home. The magistrates now began to breathe a little, and mustered courage enough to send the citizens home. The news of this invasion of the waters quickly spread through Macerata and the adjoining country, with the particulars of Friar Antony's fall, to the no small entertainment of the people, and more especially of the enemy.

NOVELLA CXL.

THE neighbourhood of San Lorenzo, near Santa Orsa, in Florence, was the favourite haunt of certain blind mendicants, who were in the habit of rising early to take their respective rounds. Some took their station at the church of the Nunziata, some in St. Michael's Gardens, while others sang songs in the suburbs; all, however, agreeing to meet at St. Laurence's Bell to dine, after having made their morning calls: for the host of the said inn wholly devoted himself to the entertainment of gentlemen of their cloth. It happened that two of the party were sitting together one morning after taking some refreshment, talking over the state of their affairs. "I first became blind," said one, "about twelve years ago, since which time I have made perhaps a hundred pounds." "Then what an unlucky fellow I am," cried the other, "not to have blinded myself sooner; for I have only saved about twenty." "Why, how long have you been blind?" inquired his companion: to which the latter answered: "Not more than three years." During this conversation, another beggar of the name of

Lazzero da Corneto joined them, saying, "God bless you, my dear brothers!" "What are you, friend?" inquired they. "I am in the dark like you; what is it you were discoursing of?" and they told him. Lazzero on this said: "Well, I was born blind, and I am now forty-seven years old; if I had saved all the money I got, I should now be one of the richest blind men in all Maremma." "I can find no one," said the three-years blind, "who has not done better than myself." He soon, however added, in the course of conversation: "What is done, is done; let us leave the past to itself, and enter into a new company. I think we three should do very well together; and we might make a common fund. We can sally out together, and take care of one another, should one of us happen to get into straits." The other two approved of the plan, and they shook hands, and swore a good round oath over the table to play each other fair. The new firm continued for some time; but a person who had happened to overhear the terms they had made, seeing them standing one Wednesday at the gate of San Lorenzo, bestowed upon one of them a farthing, saying, "Divide this shilling among you," a gift which he frequently repeated in the same words. The man who received it at length said: "Faith! I think it feels

more like a farthing than a shilling, from its size." "Where is it?" said the others, "do not let us begin to impose upon each other already." "How impose?" replied the man, "I put what I get into the bag, and so do you I hope." Lazzero here observed, "Good faith, my brethren, is a fine thing;" and so the affair stood. Though it first infused suspicions into the whole firm, still they continued to meet, and to unite their spoils every eight days, and to divide them afterwards into three parts.

About the middle of August, they resolved as usual to attend the feast of our lady at Pisa, each preparing himself for the journey with his little dog, his money dish, and a correct version of the *Intemerata*, which they sang in every village through which they passed. They arrived at Santa Gonda on the sabbath, the day fixed for the division of their spoils; and going into an inn, they requested a private room for the evening to settle their accounts. Taking possession of it along with their four-footed guides, with their cane knots in their hands, about the time of going to repose, one of them, called Salvatore, inquired what would be the best time to settle business; which it was agreed to do, as soon as the whole family was gone to rest. When the time came, Grazia, the three years blind, said:

"Come, let us sit down, and each count what he has got, and, whoever has most, must make it up to the others." This being understood, they set to work, and having enumerated the whole of their gains, Lazzero said: "I find I have just five shillings and four pence." "And I," continued Salvatore, "have exactly three shillings and two pence." "So far good," cried Grazia, "very good; and I myself have just two shillings." "But how can that be, in the devil's name?" exclaimed the others. "Indeed I cannot tell," answered Grazia. "Cannot tell?" said they; "but you must have some more shillings somewhere; you are playing us false; do you think it is the firm of the wolf and the sheep? your name is indeed Grazia, but I think it will be Disgrazia, a disgrace, sir, to us." The other replied: "I know not what you mean by that, sir; but if you will recollect, I told you before, that whenever that fellow said he gave me a shilling, I thought it was only a farthing; however, I put it into the bag, such as it was, and I would have you to know that I am just as fair and honourable as yourselves." "No, you are a perfect Judas," said Salvatore, "and you cheat us in every way you can." "Then you lie in your throat," replied Grazia; and the next moment they began to shake their fists, and to

cuff each other terribly ; while all their money fell upon the floor. Lazzero hearing the strife begun, took his club, and hazarded some hearty blows in the dark to part them. Feeling the superior effect of the cudgel, both the combatants had recourse to theirs, and they all fell to work, while the whole of their spoils lay scattered on the ground. The action becoming rather warm, the dogs began to take part in it, barking and pulling at their masters to persuade them to desist. Loud was the concert they made amongst them, for their masters feeling the effects of their teeth, began to return the compliment with their clubs, upon which the dogs howled out still more piteously. The host sleeping in the room below, said to his wife : “ Surely the demons of confusion must have broken loose above stairs ; did you ever hear such an infernal noise since you were born ? ” Both of them rose from bed, and taking a light, went forthwith to the room door, calling for admittance. But the blind combatants were too deeply engaged to attend to them, though they heard them knocking all the while. So the host burst open the door, and proceeding to separate the party, he received a pretty smart blow over his face, on which he immediately knocked one of them down, and, seizing the cudgel, he began to apply

it with so much more precision, swearing all the while, that in a short time, with the help of his wife, who screamed and cuffed as women do, he remained master of the field. He ordered the whole party off, but they were scarcely in a condition to move, and one of the dogs seized the landlady's petticoat, which it tore clean away. The floor was now strewn with the wounded and their spoils; while Lazzero declared to the host, that he believed he was a dead man. "I wish you were," replied the host, "you make such an infernal noise; so up, and be packing; I will have no such doings in my house." The blind men in the utmost distress, entreated to be permitted some hours' grace, being beaten black and blue, and their money being dispersed on all sides. "Money, what money?" cried the host, "you have nearly knocked my eyes out with that huge club." "I lament that," Lazzero said: "pardon us, my dear sir, for we are all of us as blind as a stone wall." "That is no reason you should blind me too," said the host; "so get out of my house, you rascals." "Then be so good as to gather up our money for us, and we will go," said one of them; which the host did, amounting to about half the original sum, observing there might, perhaps, be near five shillings, of which he must keep two for their

entertainment, leaving them one each. He would then, he said, appeal to the vicar for damages against their dogs, which had torn his wife's petticoat; and this would be something more. Great was the lamentation now raised by the blind men, beseeching him, for the love of heaven, not to ruin them utterly, but take what they could afford to give, and let them go. "Rogues," said the host, "you must give me something to cure my eyes, or I shall probably be as blind as you. Besides my wife's petticoat cost me ever so much." In short they were compelled to come into his terms, and give up the whole of the money which had fallen, amounting to more than half of their profits. They were then obliged to turn out, more dead than alive, well bruised and beaten, so that they cut a still more piteous figure than before, which somewhat helped to replenish their purse as they journeyed along towards Pisa. Arriving at an inn near Marti, they began to abuse each other afresh, when the host commiserating their forlorn appearance, inquired who could have used them so? "Never mind that," they replied, "but bring each of us a pint of wine to wash the remembrance of it away." They had likewise to dress their wounds, and set their broken legs and arms; after which Grazia thus addressed the others: "Now I will tell the honest

truth. I never thrust a thief's hand into the money-bag since we entered into partnership, and broken bones are all the reward I have earned, besides being nearly ruined. But short folly is better than long, and I will even verify the old saying: 'uno due e tre, io mi scompagno da te.' I will have nothing more to do with you, and be witness to it, our good host." So he afterwards proceeded on his journey to our lady's festival alone, leaving Lazzero and Salvatore to fight their own battles in future. As they were now all of them both lame and blind, great was the harvest which they reaped at our holy lady of Pisa's shrine; and they always considered their engagement as the most fortunate event in the world.

NOVELLA CLII.

It happened that a certain Spanish cavalier of the name of Messer Giletto, just returned from the holy sepulchre, arrived at Milan, bringing with him a beautiful ass, one of the pleasantest animals ever seen; for he would rise upon his hind feet like a French dancing dog, and caper as long as his master pleased, and when requested to sing, he would utter notes far more loud and sonorous than any of his race; indeed such was its compass that it displayed much of the variety of the human voice. Nor was this the least of his great accomplishments which attracted notice; and when his master paid a visit on him to Messer Bernabo, of Milan, such was the fame thereof, that after their first introduction, he immediately inquired to whom the ass belonged. The cavalier answered he was his, and one of the most amusing animals in the world. Being very richly caparisoned, after a close inspection, Messer Bernabo declared that he appeared worthy of his master's praises, and admired him greatly. So he seated the cavalier by his side, who ordered the ass to display his paces, requesting to know if his lordship would

like to witness one of his tricks? "If it be any thing new, let me see it, I entreat you," said the other, which the cavalier immediately did, to their no small diversion; M. Michelozzo, a Florentine, at the same time being present. Messer Giletto observing his lordship so amazingly diverted with his tricks, said: "You will do me great honour, sir, as I have nothing better to give, would you deign to accept him at my hands, not indeed for his value, which is little, but in order to afford some amusement to your lordship's family." Messer Bernabo, highly gratified with the offer, accepted it, and the very same day the donor received a noble charger, with more than a hundred florins in return; and after receiving many other honours, he continued his journey.

Now our friend Michelozzo, having witnessed the whole of these proceedings, also took leave of his lordship, and returned to Florence, where a bright thought struck him, that if he were to present the governor with a pair of fine asses, it might be no bad speculation, and perhaps advance him greatly in his favour. So he sent his emissaries through the Roman territories, and they had the good fortune to meet with two of a superior size, which cost him forty florins. On their arrival in Florence, he had them both very exactly measured by a saddler, com-

missioned to purchase the requisite quantity of fine scarlet, and cloth of gold, who decked them out in the most splendid style, not omitting even to adorn their comely ears. The arms of the Visconti were likewise emblazoned on the neck and crest; those of the owner being placed lower down, approaching the feet. Two handsome pages, one on horseback and one on foot, with a groom to urge them from behind, were next ordered to convey these beautiful animals very carefully, to be presented on his part to the said lord.

Great was the admiration of the Florentines as the procession passed along the streets; and what it was, and where it was going, was the general cry. "They are asses, cannot you see?" replied the page, "a present from Michelozzo to Lord Bernabo." Some thought it very fine, some made faces and shrugged up their shoulders, while others declared it was all a piece of folly, such as they should not easily see again: with other commentaries, of which the mouth of the people is usually full.

Having reached the gate of San Gallo, their splendid accoutrements were removed, and carefully packed up, until they were about to enter Bologna, when the asses were again equipped, in order to attract the admiration of the citizens; among whom

the same questions as before took place: except that they were here mistaken for chargers going to enter the lists. This favourable opinion one of the animals however destroyed by braying in a most discordant tone, which elicited a shrewd remark from an old citizen: "Faith, I believe they are only a pair of stupid asses." "Yes, sir," said the page, "which a gentleman of Florence is going to present to my lord of Milan." "But," rejoined the citizen, "he ought to have put them in a cage, as they sing so well."

On arriving at the inn of Felice Ammannati, the entertainment was doubly renewed, every one declaring it the greatest wonder that had ever been known. "But I trust," said the facetious host, "that though these carcasses are really going to the governor, they will leave behind them what I value much more for the benefit of my fields, unless it is to be forwarded to your master in Florence." After a hearty laugh, the beasts proceeded on their journey; and such was the impression their appearance everywhere made, that their fame travelling before them, several miracles were said to have happened as of old in Parma, Piacenza, and Lodi; ere they reached their destination. When they at length arrived there, the groom knocked at the city gate, informing

the porter they had brought a rich present to his lord Bernabo on the part of Michelozzo, a gentleman of Florence.

The castellan observing through the wicket two asses thus gorgeously arrayed in scarlet trappings, hastened to acquaint his master with the fact. The governor in no little perplexity on hearing this, gave orders that they should be admitted, when the head page explained the nature of his embassy, presenting the asses on the part of Michelozzo to the lord of Milan. The latter immediately replied: "You will tell your master that I am sorry he should think of thus depriving himself of the company of his companions, leaving himself behind; and so I bid you good day." He then sent for one of his officers of the name of Bergamino da Crema, commanding him to take the scarlet cloth, and to get a dress made of it for himself, and another for one of his muleteers; and to place the emblazoned coats of arms, one in the front, and one on the back of each dress, with those of Michelozzo below, when they were to await his further orders. Bergamino then went, and disposing of the asses in a stable, took possession of their rich accoutrements, sending the same day for a tailor to measure and cut them up into dresses for himself and three other muleteers

of the court. This done, they proceeded to load the asses, and going out of Milan, they soon returned with them, bringing corn, and attracting the attention of the people wherever they passed along. On inquiry into the occasion of these fine scarlet dresses; "Michelozzo," replied they, "a Florentine gentleman, presented them to us, and so we wear them out of regard to the donor." Bergamino next ordered the clerk of the governor to return a suitable reply to Michelozzo, how they had received the asses adorned with scarlet robes, and speedily put them under a course of burdens, finding them exceedingly useful in the service of his master, while their drivers had arrayed themselves in the rich trappings they formerly wore; besides displaying his coat of arms below that of their master, with all which, in honour of the donor, they had that day made a solemn procession with their burdens through Milan, attributing the whole honour to himself. This letter was signed, and sealed, and sent, bearing the signature in proper form of "Bergamino da Crema, Equipage-master and Mule-driver to his Excellency the Lord of Milan, &c., &c." directed "To my brother Michelozzo, or Bambozzo de' Bamboli, of Florence;" and delivered to the messenger, who after lingering in vain for a pecuniary gratification, set out with his

despatches for Florence. On perusing the direction, Signor Michelozzo began to change colour, and proceeding to read, he grew worse and worse, till he arrived at the name of his correspondent, the master of the mules. Claspings his hands in a paroxysm of despair, he inquired of the messenger, to whom he had delivered the letter? "To the governor," replied the man. "And what answer did he give?" "He said he was sorry you should deprive yourself of your companions for his sake." "And who gave you this letter?" "His servant," replied he, "for I could never get to see his master again." "Heavens," cried Michelozzo, "you have ruined me! what know I of Bergamino, or Merdollino? get out of my house, and never come near me again." "I will go or stay, just as you please," said the man; "but I must tell you the truth: we have made fools of ourselves wherever we appeared; it is impossible to say how much you were laughed at; you would be quite astonished if you knew." "Why, what could they say? Did no one ever make a present to a lord, think you, before?" "Yes, sir, but never of asses, I believe," said the man. "But," returned his master, "you were with me yourself, when the Spanish cavalier made a present of his." "True, sir, but that was mere accident; besides his was a know-

ing beast, and yours are as stupid as asses need to be." "I tell you, you lie," said his master; "one of their feet was worth the whole body of the other ass, equipped as they were: you have ruined me, I say; and get about your business," which the man was glad enough to do. In a short time after, our hero grew melancholy and sickened, from the vexation of his adventure; in which, as the present which he made was of a novel nature, he was in return treated in a manner perfectly novel and appropriate.

NOVELLA CLXI.

THERE have generally been enumerated in the class of painters a few eccentric characters, not often to be met with; and among these we may mention a Florentine, of the name of Bonamico, whose surname was Buffalmacco, a great artist, who flourished in the time of Giotto. Hearing of his fame, Bishop Guido d'Arezzo sent for him to ornament one of his chapels at the time when he was governor of the same place. Bonamico immediately waited upon him, and entered into terms of agreement, commencing his task upon the spot. Before the next Saturday night, he had succeeded in drawing the figures of several saints, which he left in an unfinished condition. Now there was a monkey, or rather an immense ape, belonging to the bishop, who had observed the painter's whole process from beginning to end; the mixing and refining of the colours, the beating of the eggs, the easel and the pencils in hand, with the daubing on the wall; so that comprehending the whole, and seized with the spirit of mischief, he contrived the next Sunday to visit the chapel

during the hour of dinner, having rid himself of the incumbrance of a clog, usually attached to his hinder leg. Mounting with the greatest ease up one of the columns of the scaffold, he soon stood upon the painter's stage, where he industriously commenced the same operation as he had before witnessed, mixing and confusing the colours in a strange way. Then taking the pencil in his paws, he proceeded to complete the labours of his predecessor in the style that many a pupil of a great deceased master has been known to do. By no means confining himself to a mere varnish, he laid a very heavy hand upon the figures, which he disguised in a hideous manner. In a short time, believing he had completed the painter's task, and that there could be no further use for the oils and colours, he threw the whole of them away, brushes, cups, and eggs flying abroad on all sides. On the Monday morning our friend Bonamico walked into the chapel, with the intention of putting a finishing hand to his figures, and when he saw the scene of confusion which lay before him, and cast up his eyes to behold his own painting, it is quite impossible to convey an idea of his sensations: they were such as only an artist in like circumstances can understand. He truly thought some Aretino, some devil of malice had been at work, and

that his errand was sped. Covering his face with his hands, unable to bear the sight, he turned away; and hastening back to the bishop, informed him that his altar-piece was ruined for ever.

Greatly incensed to hear this, his Grace replied: "My friend, Bonamico, you must repair the damage done, and I will reward you well. Moreover, I will give you six of my guard, with their sabres drawn; with these you shall lie in wait, and when the wretches appear, fall upon them, and cut them to pieces in a moment."—"Allow me to do that," said the enraged painter, "and I will go. When the work is repaired, if indeed that be possible, I will send word to your Grace, and you must send me the soldiers instantly." With much difficulty poor Bonamico's task was at length accomplished, and fired with the hopes of revenge, he despatched a messenger to the bishop, who gave him six armed men to lie in ambush with the painter beneath the altar. They repeated their watch several times, however, before the vile offender made his appearance; but they at last heard a noise in the church of something rolling along, and believing the wretches were come, Bonamico and his myrmidons rushed out, and beheld the ape making his way, as well as his clog and chain would permit him, towards the altar-piece. Upon

this they stopped while the offender went on, and mounting the stage with difficulty, began to repeat the very same business he had before done ; assuming the brush, and proceeding methodically to work. At this sight, Bonamico, instead of taking a deadly revenge, began to laugh outright, and turning towards his myrmidons, said, they might put up their weapons and retire ; “ for I see how it is,” he continued ; “ the bishop’s own painter has adopted a certain style of composition which his master does not altogether like, and so he has sent for me to introduce another. But we painters can never agree ; the rogue has been before hand with me, and got his revenge.” On approaching the scaffold where he stood, the ape, having first painted his visage, rose on his hind legs, and tried to frighten them away ; but soon after, dismounting from his eminence, he took to flight. Hastening after him, lest he might prejudice his Grace against the new painter, our friend Bonamico went to tell his own story, and addressed the bishop in the following words : “ There is no necessity for your lordship to invite painters to come from Florence, while you entertain one at your own court, who seems resolved that you shall paint in his manner, as he has twice destroyed the figures I have made. Your Grace’s ape has to answer for this sin ; and if you

think I deserve to be recompensed for my loss of time and labour, give me what you consider just, and I will return home." The bishop was so mightily entertained with the whole affair, more especially with the serious way in which Bonamico requested his dismissal, that so far from consenting to his departure, he entreated him to proceed with his task, adding, that as he appeared so piqued with the success of his rival, he should likewise have his revenge. For this purpose the bishop directed a large cage to be provided, into which, however reluctantly, the painter's rival was forced to enter, when he was carried to the place which had been the scene of his offence, and there doomed to the most ignominious punishment a painter could suffer, namely, to watch his rival Bonamico proceed with his design, while he sat chattering and grinning at him from his cage, until the whole work was completed. His impatience and indignation were sometimes truly ludicrous, his strange grimaces not a little interrupting Bonamico, while they excited the laughter of all the spectators. The painting being completed, and the stage removed away, the author of the mischief was set free, though he afterwards frequently haunted the spot, with the view of giving fresh specimens of his art. But finding he could no longer perform upon

the same stage, after anxiously gazing at the picture for some time, he began to turn his thoughts to some more feasible plans of mischief, the exploit we have recounted serving the whole court for amusement during several days.

NOVELLA CXCVIII.

A BLIND man of Orvieto, of the name of Cola, hit upon a device to recover a hundred florins he had been cheated of, which shewed he was possessed of all the eyes of Argus, though he had unluckily lost his own. And this he did, without wasting a farthing either upon law or arbitration, by sheer dexterity; for he had formerly been a barber, and accustomed to shave very close, having then all his eyes about him, which had been now closed for about thirty years. Alms seemed then the only resource to which he could betake himself, and such was the surprising progress he in a short time made in his new trade, that he counted a hundred florins in his purse, which he secretly carried about him until he could find a safer place. His gains far surpassed any thing he had realized with his razor and scissors; indeed they increased so fast that he no longer knew where to bestow them; until one morning happening to remain the last, as he believed, in the church, he thought of depositing his purse of a hundred florins under a loose tile in the floor behind the door, knowing the situation of the place perfectly well. After

listening for some time, without hearing a foot stirring, he very cautiously laid it in the spot; but unluckily there remained a certain Juccio Pezzicheruolo, offering his adoration before an image of San Giovanni Boccadoro, who happened to see Cola busily engaged behind the door. He continued his adorations until he saw the blind man depart, when not in the least suspecting the truth, he approached and searched the place. He soon found the identical tile, and on removing it with the help of his knife, he found the purse, which he very quietly put into his pocket, replacing the tiles just as they were; and resolving to say nothing about it, he went home.

At the end of three days, the blind mendicant, desirous of inspecting his treasure, took a quiet time for visiting the place, and removing the tile, searched a long while in great perturbation, but all in vain, to find his beloved purse. At last, replacing things just as they were, he was compelled to return in no very enviable state of mind to his dwelling; and there meditating over his loss, the harvest of the toil of so many days, by dint of intense thinking, a bright thought struck him, as frequently happens by cogitating in the dark, how he had yet a kind of chance of redeeming his lost spoils. Accordingly in the morning he called his young guide, a

lad about nine years old, saying, "My son, lead me to church!" and before setting out he tutored him how he was to behave, seating himself at his side before the entrance, and particularly remarking every person who should enter into the church. "Now if you happen to see any one who takes particular notice of me, and who either laughs, or makes any sign, be sure you observe it, and tell me." The boy promised he would; and they proceeded accordingly, and took their station before the church. There they remained the whole of the morning, till just as they were beginning to despair, Juccio made his appearance, and fixing his eyes upon the blind man, could not refrain from laughing. When the dinner hour arrived, the father and son prepared to leave the place, the former inquiring by the way, whether his son had observed any one looking hard at him as he passed along.—"That I did," answered the lad, "but only one, and he laughed as he went past us. I do not know his name, but he is strongly marked with the small pox, and lives somewhere near the Frati Minori."—"Do you think, my dear lad," said his father, "you could take me to his shop, and tell me when you see him there?"—"To be sure I could," said the lad. "Then come, let us lose no time," replied his father, "and when we are there, tell me,

and while I speak to him, you can step on one side, and wait for me." So the sharp little fellow led him along the way until he reached a cheesemonger's stall, when he acquainted his father, and brought him close to it. No sooner did the blind man hear him speaking with his customers, than he recognised him for the same Juccio, with whom he had formerly been acquainted during his days of light. When the coast was a little clear, our blind hero entreated some moments' conversation, and Juccio, half suspecting the occasion, took him on one side into a little room, saying, "Cola, friend, what good news?"—"Why," said Cola, "I am come to consult you, in great hopes you will be of use to me. You know it is a long time since I lost my sight, and being in a destitute condition, I was compelled to earn my subsistence by begging alms. Now by the grace of God, and with the help of you, and of other good people of Orvieto, I have saved a sum of two hundred florins, one of which I have deposited in a safe place, and the other is in the hands of my relations, which I expect to receive, with interest, in the course of a week. Now if you would consent to receive, and to employ for me to the best advantage, the whole sum of two hundred florins, it would be doing me a great kindness, for there is no one besides in all Or-

viato in whom I dare to confide; nor do I like to be at the expense of paying a notary for doing business which we can as well transact ourselves. Only I wish you would say nothing about it, but receive the two hundred florins from me to employ as you think best. Say not a word about it, for there would be an end of my calling, were it known I had received so large a sum in alms." Here the blind mendicant stopped; and the sly Juccio imagining he might thus become master of the entire sum, said, he should be very happy to serve him in every way he could, and would return an answer the next morning, as to the best way of laying out the money. Cola then took his leave, while Juccio going directly for the purse, deposited it in its old place, being in full expectation of soon receiving it again, with the addition of the other hundred, as it was clear that Cola had not yet missed the sum. The cunning old mendicant on his part expected that he would do no less, and trusting that his plot might have succeeded, he set out the very same day to the church; and had the delight, on removing the tile, to find his purse really there. Seizing upon it with the utmost eagerness, he concealed it under his clothes, and placing the tiles exactly in the same position, he hastened, whistling, home, troubling himself very little about his appointment of the next day.

The sly thief Juccio set out accordingly the next morning to see his friend Cola, and actually met him on the road. "Whither are you going?" inquired Juccio. "I was going," said Cola, "to your house." The former then taking the blind man aside, said, "I am resolved to do what you ask; and since you are pleased to confide in me, I will tell you of a plan I have in hand of laying out your money to advantage. If you will put the two hundred into my possession, I will make a purchase in cheese and salt meat, a speculation which cannot fail to turn to good account."—"Thank you," said Cola, "I am going to-day for the other hundred, which I mean to bring, and when you have got them both, you can do with them what you think proper." Juccio said, "Then let me have them soon, for I think I can secure this bargain; and as the soldiers are come into the town, who are fond of these articles, I think it cannot fail to answer; so go, and heaven speed you." And Cola went; but with very different intentions to those imagined by his friend; Cola being now clear-sighted, and Juccio truly blind. The next day Cola called on his friend, with very downcast and melancholy looks, and when Juccio bade him good day, he said, "I wish from my soul it were good, or even a middling day for me."—"Why, what is the matter?"—"The matter!" said Cola, "why it is all over with me; some

rascal has stolen a hundred florins from the place where they were hidden, and I cannot recover a penny from my relations, so that I may eat my fingers off for any thing I have to expect." Juccio replied, "This is like all the rest of my speculations. I have invariably lost where I expected to make a good hit. What I shall do, I know not; for if the person should choose to keep me to the agreement I made for you, I shall be in a pretty dilemma indeed."—"Yet," said Cola, "I think my condition is still worse than yours. I shall be sadly distressed, and shall have to amass a fresh capital, which will take me ever so long. And when I have got it, I will take care not to conceal it in a hole in the floor, or trust it, Juccio, into any friend's hands."—"But," said Juccio, "if we could contrive to recover what is owing by your relations, we might still make some pretty profit by it, I doubt not." For he thought, if he could only get hold of the hundred he had returned, it would still be something in his way. "Why," said Cola, "to tell the truth, if I were to proceed against my relations, I believe I might get it; but such a thing would ruin my business, my dear Juccio, for ever: the world would know I was worth money, and I should get no more money from the world; so I fear I shall hardly

be able to profit by your kindness, though I shall always consider myself as much obliged as if I had actually cleared a large sum. Moreover, I am going to teach another blind man my profession, and if we have luck, you shall see me again, and we can venture a speculation together." So far the wily mendicant; to whom Juccio said, "Well, go, and try to get money soon, and bring it; you know where to find me, but look sharp about you, and the Lord speed you: farewell."—"Farewell," said Cola, "and I am well rid of thee," he whispered to himself; and going upon his way, in a short time he doubled his capital; but he no longer went near his friend Juccio, to know how he should invest it. He had great diversion in telling the story to his companions during their feasts, always concluding, "By St. Lucia! Juccio is the blinder man of the two: he thought it was a bold stroke to risk his hundred to double the amount."

For my own part I think the blind must possess a more acute intellect than other people, inasmuch as the light, exhibiting such a variety of objects to view, is apt to distract the attention, of which many examples might be adduced. For instance, two gentlemen may be conversing together on some matter of business, and in the middle of a sentence, a fine

woman happens to pass by, and they will suddenly stop, gazing after her ; or a fine equipage, or any other object, is enough to turn the current of their thoughts. And then we are obliged to recollect ourselves, saying, " Where was I ? " " What was it that I was observing ? " A thing which never occurs to a blind man. The philosopher Democritus, very properly on this account, knocked his own eyes out, in order to catch objects in a juster light with his mind's eye.

It is impossible to describe Juccio's vexation on going to the church, and finding the florins were gone. His regret was far greater than if he had actually lost a hundred of his own ; as is known to be the case with all inveterate rogues, half of whose pleasure consists in depriving others of their lawful property.

Novels of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino.

FROM THE WORK ENTITLED "IL PECORONE."

SER GIOVANNI,

DETTO IL FIORENTINO.*

THE following specimens are from a little volume entitled *Il Pecorone*, (or the *Dunce*) containing fifty *novelle*, attributed to the pen of SER GIOVANNI, called the Florentine, in default of his real name, which has never yet been ascertained. There is consequently little to be learned regarding his character or the circumstances of his life, beyond what the anonymous writer himself acquaints us with in the introduction to his work. We can only gather that he was a Florentine notary, and commenced his series of tales in the year 1378, at a little village in the neighbourhood of Forli. As he flourished near the golden period of Boccaccio, his language, in point of easy elegance and correctness, is considered inferior only to the style of that great master. Of all his numerous imitators, none, likewise, have approached nearer to that happy and ingenious method

* *Il Pecorone di Ser Giovanni Fiorentino*, nel quale si contengono cinquanta *Novelle Antiche*, belle d' invenzione e di stile : Milan, 1558.

of relation, which forms so distinguishing a feature in the novels of Boccaccio.

The occasion of the production of these tales is very pleasingly told in a little preamble to the work, as well as in a sonnet, explaining the meaning of its very singular title, "which the author assumed," observes Mr. Dunlop; "as some Italian academicians styled themselves *Insensati, Stolidi, &c.*: appellations in which there was not always so much irony as they imagined."

In this short introduction we are informed, that "a young Florentine gentleman of the name of Auretto, falling in love with one of the sisterhood of the convent of Forli, enters himself as a friar of the same order. Being shortly after promoted to the office of chaplain, he is enabled to obtain frequent interviews with the beautiful recluse; and by way of beguiling their time innocently together, they each agree to repeat a story in turn, thus dividing them into different days and numbers." The stories are occasionally concluded with poetical effusions of no common merit, in the form of *canzoni*, chiefly *rime terze*, or *quartette*.

"Finding myself," observes the author, "in the village of Dovadola, an exile and an outcast of fortune, as will too plainly appear in the following book,

I began my labours in the year 1378, under the reign of our great pontiff, Urban VI. and of the Emperor Charles IV. King of Bohemia and of the Romans. Now in the city of Forli, in Romagna, was a convent, consisting of a pretty numerous sisterhood, with their lady prioress; among whom Sister Saturnina was most esteemed for the perfect and holy life she led. She was besides one of the most beautiful, affable, and accomplished young creatures, whom nature in her most lavish mood had ever formed; insomuch that the fame of her excellence and beauty went forth on all sides, attracting the love and admiration of the whole place." We may flatter ourselves that such handsome testimonials, given by the author, to the character of his lovers, will be quite sufficient to obviate the least misconstruction of the motives under which they meet: and, we may observe, that the same propriety is preserved throughout the entire work.

A number of the stories are founded on real historical incidents, chiefly taken, according to Manni, from the works of Malespini and Villani; as very clearly appears on a comparison of their productions with those of our novelist. Some critics, indeed, have not scrupled to assert, that our author was no other person than Giovanni Villani, the historian; an

opinion, however, for which there is no further authority than the coincidence of name, and a few historical facts borrowed by Ser Giovanni from the works of that writer.

He is distinguished by Poccianti, in his critical notices* merely as "Johannes Comicus, the elegant and accomplished author of fifty comedies, entitled 'Il Pecorone'," literally, the Great Sheep. The first edition of the work that appeared was at Milan, 1558, though subsequent impressions falsely bearing the date of 1554 are known to exist.

It is remarked by Mr. Dunlop, of the first story, that "it is one of the most beautiful triumphs of honor ever recorded."† And this, with several others, not devoid of interest, though by no means of equal merit, will be found in the following selection.

* Mich. Pocc. Cat. Script. Flor. p. 96.

† History of Fiction, vol. ii. p. 367.

GIOVANNI FIORENTINO.

FIRST DAY, NOVELLA I.

HAVING agreed upon the manner in which they were to meet each other in the convent parlour, as we have already stated, the two lovers were true to the appointed hour. With mutual pleasure and congratulations, they seated themselves at each other's side, when Friar Aurette, in the following words, began: "It is now my intention, my own Saturnina, to treat you with a little love-tale, founded on some incidents which really occurred, not very long ago, in Sienna. There resided there a noble youth of the name of Galgano, who, besides his birth and riches, was extremely clever, valiant, and affable, qualities which won him the regard of all ranks of people in the place. But I am very sorry to add that, attracted by the beauty of a Siennese lady, no other, you must know, than the fair Minoccia, wedded to our noble cavalier, Messer Stricca, (though I beg this may go no further)—our young friend unfortunately and too late, fell passionately in love with her.

“ So violently enamoured did he shortly become, that he purloined her glove, which he wore with her favorite colours wherever he went; at tilts and tourneys, at rich feasts and festivals, all of which he was proud to hold in honor of his love: yet all these failed to render him agreeable to the lady, a circumstance that caused our poor friend Galgano no little pain and perplexity. A prey to the excessive cruelty and indifference of one, dearer to him than his own life, who neither noticed nor listened to him, he still followed her like her shadow, contriving to be near her at every party, whether a bridal or a christening, a funeral or a play. Long and vainly, with love messages after love messages, and presents after presents, did he sue; but never would the noble lady deign to receive or listen to them for a moment, ever bearing herself more reserved and harshly, as he more earnestly pressed the ardor of his suit.

“ It was, thus, his fate to remain subject to this very irksome and overwhelming passion, until wearied out, at length, he would break into words of grief and bitterness against his ‘bosom’s lord.’— ‘Alas! dread master of my destiny,’ he would say, ‘Oh, Love! can you behold me, thus wasting my very soul away; ever loving, but never beloved again! See to it, dread lord, that you are not, in so

doing, offending against your own laws !' And so, unhappily dwelling upon the lady's cruelty, he seemed fast verging upon despair ; then again humbly resigning himself to the yoke he bore, he resolved to await some interval of grace, watching, however vainly, for some occasion of rendering himself more pleasing to the object he adored.

" Now it happened that Messer Stricca and his consort went to pass some days at their country-seat near Sienna ; and it was not long before the love-sick Galgano was observed to cross their route, to hang upon their skirts, and to pass along the same way, always with the hawk upon his hand, as if violently set upon bird-hunting. Often, indeed, he passed so close to the villa where the lady dwelt, that one day being seen by Messer Stricca, who recognised him, he was very familiarly entreated to afford them the pleasure of his company ; ' and I hope,' added Messer Stricca, ' that you will stay the evening with us.' Thanking his friend very kindly for the invitation, Galgano, strange to say, at the same time begged to be held excused, pleading another appointment, which he believed—he was sorry—he was obliged to keep. ' Then,' added Messer Stricca, ' at least step in, and take some little refreshment : ' to which the only reply returned was, ' A thousand thanks, and farewell,

Messer Stricca; for I am in haste.' The moment the latter had turned his back, our poor lover began to upbraid himself bitterly for not availing himself of the invitation, exclaiming, 'What a wretch am I, not to accept such an offer as this! I should at least have seen her—her, whom from my soul, I cannot help loving beyond all else in the world.'

"As he thus went, meditating upon the same subject, along his solitary way, it chanced that he sprung a large jay, on which he instantly gave his hawk the wing, which pursuing its quarry into Messer Stricca's gardens, and there striking true, the ensuing struggle took place. Hearing the hawk's cry, both he and his lady ran towards the garden balcony, in time to see, and were surprised at the skill and boldness of the bird in seizing and bringing down its game. Not in the least aware of the truth, the lady inquired of her husband, to whom the bird belonged? 'Mark the hawk,' replied M. Stricca; 'it does its work well; it resembles its master, who is one of the handsomest and most accomplished young men in Sienna, and a very excellent young fellow, too;—yes, it does well.'

"'And who may that be?' said his wife, with a careless air. 'Who,' returned he, 'but the noble Galgano? the same, love, who just now passed by. I wished he would have come in to sup with us; but

he would not. He is certainly one of the finest and best tempered men I ever saw.' And so saying, he rose from the window, and they went to supper. Galgano, in the mean while, having given his hawk the call, quietly pursued his way; but the praises lavished upon him by her husband made an impression upon the lady's mind, such as the whole of his previous solicitations had failed to produce. However strange, she dwelt upon them long and tenderly. It happened that about this very time, Messer Stricca was chosen ambassador from the Siennese to the people of Perugia, and setting out in all haste, he was compelled to take a sudden leave of his lady. I am sorry to have to observe that the moment the cavalcade was gone by, recalling the idea of her noble lover, the lady likewise despatched an embassy to our young friend, entreating him, after the example of her husband, to favor her with his company in the evening. No longer venturing to refuse, he sent a grateful answer back, that he would very willingly attend. And having heard tidings of Messer Stricca's departure for Perugia, he set out at a favorable hour in the evening, and speedily arrived at the house of the lady to whom he had been so long and so vainly attached.

"Checking his steed in full career, he threw him-

self off, and the next moment found himself in her presence, falling at her feet, and saluting her with the most respectful and graceful carriage. She took him joyously by the hand, bidding him a thousand tender welcomes, and setting before him the choicest fruits and refreshments of the season. Then inviting him to be seated, he was served with the greatest variety and splendor; and more delicious than all, the bright lady herself presided there, no longer frowning and turning away, when he began to breathe the story of his love and sufferings into her ear. Delighted and surprised beyond his proudest hopes, Galgano was profuse in his expressions of gratitude and regard, though he could not quite conceal his wonder at this happy and unexpected change; entreating, at length, as a particular favor, that she would deign to acquaint him with its blessed cause. 'That will I do soon,' replied the glowing beauty; 'I will tell you every word, and therefore did I send for you;' and she looked into his face with a serene and pure, yet somewhat mournful countenance. 'Indeed,' returned her lover, a little perplexed, 'words can never tell half of what I felt, dear lady, when I heard you had this morning sent for me, after having desired and followed you for so long a time in vain.' 'Listen to me, and I will tell you,

Galgano ; but first sit a little nearer to me, for, alas ! I love you. A few days ago, you know, you passed near our house when hawking, and my husband told me that he saw you, and invited you in to supper ; but you would not come. At that moment your hawk sprang and pursued its prey, when seeing the noble bird make such a gallant fight, I inquired to whom it belonged, and my husband replied, ‘ To whom should it belong, but to the most excellent young man in Sienna ? ’ and that it did well to resemble you, as he had never met a more pleasing and accomplished gentleman. ‘ Did he ?—did he say that ? ’ interrupted her lover. ‘ He did, indeed, and much more, praising you to me over and over ; until hearing it, and knowing the tenderness you have long borne me, I could not resist the temptation of sending for you hither : ’ and, half blushes, half tears, she confessed that he was no longer indifferent to her, and that such was the occasion of it. ‘ Can the whole of this be true ? ’ exclaimed Galgano. ‘ Alas ! too true, ’ she replied : ‘ I know not how it is, but I wish he had not praised you so. ’ After struggling with himself a few moments, the unhappy lover withdrew his hand from hers, saying : ‘ Now God forbid that I should do the least wrong to one who has so nobly expressed himself, and who has ever shewn so much kind-

ness and courtesy to me.' Then suddenly rising, as with an effort, from his seat, he took a gentle farewell of the lady, not without some tears shed on both sides; both loving, yet respecting each other. Never afterwards did this noble youth allude to the affair in the slightest way, but always treated Messer Stricca with the utmost regard and reverence during his acquaintance with the family.

FIRST DAY, NOVELLA II.*

THE last story being thus happily brought to a conclusion, Saturnina in her turn began: "It has indeed pleased me much, especially when I consider the noble resolution of the lover, even while he held the long wished-for object of his affections, as it were, in his arms. Few, I fear, would have been capable of

* This story, which has been imitated in the fourth tale of the fourth Night of Straparola, is supposed to be of eastern origin; and it has certainly a striking resemblance to one in the Bahar Danush, a work compiled out of some of the oldest Brahmin traditions. It is, moreover, curious, as having, through the medium of a translation, suggested the idea of several of those amusing scenes in the Merry Wives of Windsor, in which the renowned Falstaff acquaints Master Ford, disguised under the name of Brooke, with his progress in the good graces of Mrs. Ford. The contrivances, likewise, by which he eludes the vengeance of the jealous husband, are similar to those recounted in the novel, with the addition of throwing the unwieldy knight into the river. Mr. Dunlop informs us that the same story has been translated in a collection, entitled "The Fortunate, Deceived, and Unfortunate Lovers;" and that Shakspeare may probably also have seen it in "Tarleton's Newes out of Purgatorie," where the incidents related in the Two Lovers of Pisa are given according to Straparola's version of the story. But

making such a sacrifice under similar circumstances : it is a truly moral and lofty example for his sex. It is nevertheless my intention, for the sake of variety, to follow it with one, which I think will amuse you not a little, if it does nothing more.

“There were once two very intimate friends, both of the family of Savelli, in Rome, the name of one of whom was Bucciolo, of the other Pietro Paolo, both of good birth and easy circumstances. Expressing a mutual wish to study for a while together at Bologna, they took leave of their relatives, and set out. One of them

it must be confessed that our great English dramatist has improved upon the incidents, in such a way as to give a still more humorous idea of the hero, whose adventures are the result only of a feigned regard on the part of Mistress Ford. Molière, too, would appear to have made a no less happy use of it than our inimitable dramatist, in his “*Ecole des Femmes*,” where the humour of the piece turns upon a young gentleman confiding his progress in the affections of a lady to the ear of her guardian, who believed that he was on the point of espousing her himself. Two other French productions, entitled “*Le Maître en droit*,” one of them from the pen of Fontaine, have also been drawn from the same source ; and every one must be acquainted with that part of *Gil Blas*’s history, where Don Raphael confides to Balthazar the progress of his regard for his wife ; and particularly dwells upon the vexatious behaviour he met with on the part of the gentleman, by his unexpected return home.—Vide Dunlop’s *History of Fiction*, vol. ii. p. 370.

attached himself to the study of the civil, the other to that of the canon law ; and thus they continued to apply themselves for some length of time. But, as you are aware that the subject of the Decretals takes a much narrower range than is embraced by the common law, so Bucciollo, who pursued the former, made greater progress than did Pietro Paolo ; and having taken a licentiate's degree, he began to think of returning to Rome.

“ ‘ You see, my dear fellow student,’ he observed to his friend Paolo, ‘ I am now a licentiate, and it is time for me to think of moving homewards !’ ‘ Nay, not so,’ replied his companion, ‘ I have to entreat you will not think of leaving me here this winter ; stay for me till spring, and we can then return together. In the meanwhile you may pursue some other science, so that you need not lose any time ;’ and to this Bucciollo at length consented, promising to await his relation's own good time. Having thus resolved, he had immediate recourse to his former tutor, informing him of his determination to bear his friend company a little longer, and entreating to be employed in some pleasant study, to beguile the period during which he had to remain. The professor begged him to suggest something he would like, as he should be very happy to assist him in its attain-

ment. 'My worthy tutor,' replied Bucciolo, 'I think I should like to learn the way in which one falls in love, and the best manner to begin.' 'Oh, very good,' cried the tutor laughing, 'you could have hit upon nothing better, for you must know that if that be your object, I am a complete adept in the art. To lose no time, in the first place, go next Sunday morning to the church of the Frati Minori, where all the ladies will be clustered together, and pay proper attention during service, in order to discover if any one of them in particular happen to please you. When you have done this, keep your eye upon her after service, to see the way she takes to her residence, and then come back to me. And let this be the first lesson, first part, of that in which it is my intention to instruct you.' Bucciolo went accordingly, and taking his station the next Sunday in the church, as he had been directed, his eyes wandering in every direction except the proper one, were fixed upon all the pretty women in the place; and upon one in particular who pleased him above all the rest. She was far the most attractive and beautiful lady he could find; and on leaving the church, Bucciolo took care to obey his master, and follow her until he had made himself acquainted with her residence. Nor was it long before the young lady

began to perceive that the student was smitten with her ; upon which, Bucciollo returning to his master, acquainted him with what he had done. ‘ I have learned as much as you ordered me, and found somebody I like very well.’ ‘ So far good,’ cried the professor, not a little amused at the sort of science to which his pupil thus seriously devoted himself, ‘ so far good ; and now mind what I have next to say to you. Take care to walk two or three times a day very respectfully before her house, casting your eyes about you in such a way, that no one catch you staring in her face ; but look in a modest and becoming manner, so that she cannot fail to perceive, and to be struck with it. And then return to me, and this, sir, will be the second lesson in this gay science.’ So the scholar went, and promenaded with great discretion before the lady’s door, who certainly observed that he appeared to be passing to and fro, out of respect to one of the inhabitants. This attracted her attention, for which Bucciollo very discreetly expressed his gratitude both by looks and bows, which being as often returned, the scholar began to be aware that the lady liked him. Upon this he immediately went and informed the professor of all that had passed, who replied : ‘ Come, you have done very well ; I am hitherto quite satisfied. It is now

time for you to find some way of speaking to her, which you may easily do by means of one of those gipsies who haunt the streets of Bologna, crying ladies' veils, purses, and other rare articles to sell. Send word by her that you are the lady's most faithful devoted servant, and that there is no one in the world who so much wish to please. In short, let her urge your suit, and take care to bring the answer to me as soon as you have received it; I will then tell you how you are to proceed.' Departing in all haste, he soon found a little old pedlar woman, quite perfect in her trade, to whom he said he should take it as a particular favour if she would do one thing, for which he would reward her handsomely. Upon this she declared her readiness to serve him in any thing he pleased, 'for you know,' she continued, 'it is my business to get money in every way I can.' Bucciolo gave her two florins, saying, 'I wish you to go as far as the Via Maccarella for me to day, where resides a young lady of the name of Giovanna, for whom I have the very highest regard. Pray tell her so, and recommend me to her most affectionately, so as to obtain for me her good graces by every means in your power. I entreat you to have my interest at heart, and to say such pretty things as she cannot refuse to hear.' 'Oh,'

said the little old woman, 'leave that to me, sir; I will not fail to say a good word for you at the proper time.' 'Delay not,' said Bucciolo, 'but go now, and I will wait for you here;' and she set off immediately, taking a basket of her trinkets under her arm. On approaching the place, she saw the lady before the door, enjoying the open air, and curtsying to her very low, 'Do I happen to have any thing here you would fancy?' she said, displaying her treasures. 'Pray, take something, madam, whatever pleases you best.' Veils, stays, purses, and mirrors, were now spread in the most tempting way before her eyes, as the old woman took her station at the lady's side. Out of all these, her attention appeared to be most attracted by a beautiful purse, which she observed, if she could afford, she should like to buy. 'Nay, madam, do not think any thing about the price,' exclaimed the little pedlar; 'take any thing you please, for they are all paid for, I assure you.'

"Surprised at hearing this, and observing the very respectful manner of the speaker, the lady replied: 'Do you know what you are saying? what do you mean by that?' The old creature pretending now to be much affected, said: 'Well, madam, if it must be so, I will tell you. It is very true, that a

young gentleman of the name of Bucciolo sent me hither, one who loves you better than all the world besides. There is nothing he would not do to please you, and indeed he appears so very wretched because he cannot speak to you, and he is so very good, that it is quite a pity. I think it will be the death of him; and then he is such a fine, such an elegant young man; the more is the pity.' On hearing this, the lady blushing deeply, turned sharply round upon the little old hag, exclaiming: 'Oh, you wicked little creature; were it not for the sake of my own reputation, I would give you such a lesson, that you should remember it to the latest day of your life. A pretty story to come before decent people with! Are not you ashamed of yourself to let such words come out of your mouth?' Then seizing an iron bar that lay across the door-way, 'Ill be-tide you, little wretch,' she cried, as she brandished it, 'if you ever return this way again, you may depend upon it, you will never go back alive.' The trembling old creature, quickly bundling up her pack, ran off, in dread of feeling that cruel weapon on her shoulders; nor did she once think of stopping till she had reached the place where Signor Bucciolo stood. Eagerly inquiring the news, and in what way she had prospered; 'Oh, very badly, very

badly,' answered the little gipsey, 'I never was in such a fright in all my life. Why, she will neither see nor listen to you, and if I had not run away, I should have felt the weight of her hand upon my shoulders. For my own part, I shall go there no more,' chinking the two florins; 'and I would advise you to look to yourself, how you proceed in such affairs in future.' Poor Bucciolo now became quite disconsolate, and returned in all haste to acquaint the professor with this unlucky result. But the tutor, not a whit cast down, consoled him, saying: 'Do not despair, Bucciolo; a tree is not levelled at a single stroke, you know. I think you must have a repetition of your lesson to night. So go and walk before her door as usual, notice how she eyes you, and whether she appears angry or not; and then come back again to me.' He proceeded without delay to the lady's house, who the moment she perceived him called her maid, giving her directions as follows: 'Quick, quick; hasten after that young man; that is he; and tell him from me that he must come and speak to me this evening, without fail; yes, without fail.' The girl soon came up with Bucciolo: 'My lady, sir, my lady Giovanna would be glad of the pleasure of your company this evening; she would be very glad to speak to you.' Greatly surprised

at this, Bucciolo replied : ' Tell your lady I shall be most happy to wait upon her ;' and turning round, he set off once more to the professor, and reported the progress of the case. But this time his master looked a little more serious, for from some trivial circumstances put together, he began to entertain suspicions, as it really turned out, that the lady was no other than his own wife. So he rather anxiously inquired of Bucciolo, whether he intended to accept the invitation ? ' To be sure I do,' replied his pupil. ' Then promise,' rejoined the professor, ' that you will come here before you set off.' ' Certainly,' said Bucciolo, ' I will ;' and he took his leave.

" Now our hero was far from suspecting that the lady boasted so near a relationship to his beloved tutor, although the latter began to feel rather uneasy as to the result, feeling certain twinges of jealousy by no means pleasant. For he passed most of his winter evenings at the college, where he gave lectures, and not unfrequently remained there for the night. I should be sorry, thought he, that this young gentleman were learning these things at my expense ; and I must therefore know the real state of the case. In the evening his pupil called again, saying : ' Worthy sir, I am now ready to go.' ' Well, go,' replied the professor ; ' but be wise, Signor Bucciolo, be wise :



think more than once what you are about.' 'Trust me for that,' replied the scholar, a little piqued, 'I shall go well provided, and not walk like a fool into the mouth of danger unarmed.' And away he went, furnished with a good cuirass, a rapier, and a stiletto in his belt. He was no sooner on his way than the professor slipped out quietly after him, following him close at his heels, and truly he saw him stop at his own door, which, on a pretty smart tap being given, was opened in a moment, and the pupil was admitted by the lady herself. When the professor saw that it was indeed his own wife, he was quite overwhelmed, saying in a faint voice to himself: 'Alas! I fear this young fellow has learned more than he confesses, at my expense;' and making a cruel vow to revenge himself, he ran back to the college, where, arming himself with sword and knife, he hastened back in a terrible passion, with the intention of wreaking his vengeance on poor Bucciolo without delay. Arriving at his own door, he gave a pretty smart knock, which the lady, sitting before the fire with Bucciolo, instantly recognized for her husband's. So taking hold of Bucciolo, she concealed him in all haste, under a heap of damp clothes, lying on a table near the window, ready for ironing; and this done,

she ran to the door, and inquired who was there: 'Open, quick,' returned the professor, 'you vile woman, you shall soon know who I am.' On opening the door, she beheld him with a drawn sword, and exclaimed: 'Oh, my dearest life! what means this?' 'You know very well,' said he, 'what it means; the villain is now in the house.' 'Good heaven, what is it you say?' cried his wife, 'are you gone out of your wits? Come and search the house, and if you find any body, I will give you leave to kill me on the spot. What, do you think I should now begin to misconduct myself as I never before did, as none of my family ever did before? Beware, lest the evil one should be tempting you, and suddenly depriving you of your senses, drive you to perdition.'

"But the professor calling out for candles, began to search the house, from the cellars upwards, among the tubs and casks, in every place but the right one, running his sword through the beds and under the beds, and into every inch of the bedding, leaving no corner or crevice of the whole house untouched. The lady accompanied him with a candle in her hand, frequently interrupting him with, 'Say your beads, say your beads, good sir; it is certain that the evil one is dealing with you; for were I half so bad

as you esteem me, I would kill myself with my own hands. But I entreat you not to give way to his evil suggestions; oppose the adversary while you can.'

"Hearing these virtuous asseverations of his wife, and not being able to meet with any one after the strictest search, the professor began to think that he must indeed be possessed, and in a short time extinguishing the lights, returned to his rooms. The lady, shutting the door upon him, called out to Bucciolo to come from his hiding place, and stirring the fire, began to prepare a fine capon for supper, with some delicious wines and fruits. And thus they regaled themselves, highly entertained with each other; nor was it their least satisfaction that the professor had just left them, apparently convinced that they had learned nothing at his expense.

"Proceeding the next morning to college, Bucciolo, without the least suspicion of the truth, informed his master that he had something for his ear which he was sure would make him laugh. 'How, how so?' exclaimed the professor. 'Why,' returned his pupil, 'you must know that last night, just at the very time I was in the lady's house, who should come in but her husband, and in such a rage! He searched the whole house from top to bottom, without being able to find me. I lay under a heap of newly washed

clothes,* which were not half dry. In short the lady played her part so well, that the poor gentleman forthwith took his leave, and we afterwards eat a fine fat capon for supper, and drank such wines, and with such a zest! It was really one of the pleasantest evenings I ever spent in my life. But I think I will go and take a nap, for I promised to return again this afternoon about the same hour.'—'Then be sure before you go,' said the professor, trembling with suppressed rage, 'be sure to tell me when you set off.'—'Oh, certainly,' replied Bucciolo, and away he went. Such was now the unhappy tutor's condition, as to render him incapable of delivering a single lecture during the whole day; and such his extreme vexation and desire to behold the evening, that he spent the whole time in arming himself cruelly, with rapier, sword, and cuirass, dwelling only upon deeds of blood. At the appointed hour came Bucciolo, with the utmost innocence, saying, 'My dear tutor, I am going now.'—'Yes, go,' replied the professor, 'and come back again to-morrow morning, if you can, to tell me how you have

* In the incident of the damp linen, we have the original of Sir John Falstaff's happy contrivance, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor;" the story being well known to most of our early English dramatists.

fared.'—'I intend to do so,' said Bucciolò, and departed at a brisk pace for the house of the lady. Armed cap-à-pie, the professor ran out after him, keeping pretty close at his heels, with the intention of catching him just as he entered. But the lady being on the watch opened the door so quickly for the pupil, that she shut it in the master's face, who began to knock and to call out with a furious noise. Extinguishing the candle in a moment, the lady placed Bucciolò behind the door, and throwing her arms round her husband's neck as he entered, motioned to her lover, while she thus held his enemy, to make his escape; and he, upon the husband rushing forwards, stepped out from behind the door unperceived. She then began to scream as loud as she could, 'Help, help, the professor is run mad! Will nobody help me?' for he was in an ungovernable rage, and she clung faster to him than before. The neighbours running to her assistance, and seeing the peaceable professor thus armed with all these deadly weapons, and his wife crying out, 'Help, for the love of heaven; too much study hath driven him mad!' they really believed such to be the fact. 'Come, good master,' they said, 'what is all this? Try to compose yourself; nay, do not struggle so hard, but let us help you to your couch.' 'How

can I rest, think you,' he replied, 'while this wicked woman harbours paramours in my house? I saw him come in with my own eyes.'—'Wretch that I am,' cried his wife, 'inquire of all my friends and neighbours whether any one of them ever saw any thing the least unbecoming in my conduct?' The whole party, with one voice, entreated the master to lay such thoughts aside, for that there was not a better lady breathing, nor one who set a higher value upon her reputation.—'But how can that be,' said the tutor, "when I saw him enter the house with my own eyes? and he is in it now.' In the mean while the lady's two brothers arrived, when she began to weep bitterly, exclaiming, 'Oh, my dear brothers, my poor husband is gone mad, quite mad; and he even says there is a man in the house! I believe he would kill me if he could; but you know me too well to listen a moment to such a story;' and she continued to weep. The brothers forthwith accosted the professor in no very gentle terms: 'We are surprised, we are shocked, sir, to find that you dare bestow such epithets on our sister; what can have led you, after living so amicably together, to bring these charges against her now?'—'I can only tell you,' replied the enraged professor, 'that there is a man in the house; I saw him.'—'Then come and

let us find him; shew him to us, for we will sift this matter to the bottom,' retorted the incensed brothers. 'Shew us the man, and we will then punish her in such a way as will satisfy you!'

"One of them taking his sister aside, said, 'First tell me, have you really got any one hidden in the house? Tell the truth!'—'Heavens!' cried his sister, 'I tell you I would rather suffer death. Should I be the first to bring a scandal on our house? I wonder you are not ashamed to mention such a thing.' Rejoiced to hear this, the brothers, directed by the professor, immediately commenced a search. Half frantic, he led them directly to the great bundle of linen, which he pierced through and through with his sword, firmly believing he was killing Bucciolo all the while, taunting him at the same time at every blow. 'There, I told you,' cried his wife, 'he was quite mad; to think of destroying his own property thus! It is plain he did not help to get them up,' she continued, whimpering; 'all my best clothes.' Having now sought everywhere in vain, one of the brothers observed, 'He is indeed mad;' to which the other agreed, while he again attacked the professor in the bitterest terms. 'You have carried things too far, sir; your conduct to our sister is shameful, nothing but insanity can excuse it.' Vexed enough before,

the professor upon this flew into a violent passion, and brandished his naked sword in such a way that the others were obliged to use their sticks, which they did so very effectually, that after breaking them over his back, they chained him down, like a madman, upon the floor, declaring he had lost his wits by excessive study; and taking possession of his house, they remained with their sister the whole night. The next morning they sent for a physician, who ordered a couch to be placed as near as possible to the fire;* that no one should be allowed to speak or reply to the patient; and that he should be strictly dieted until he recovered his wits; and this regimen was diligently enforced.

“A report immediately spread throughout Bologna, that the good professor had become insane, which caused very general regret, his friends observing to each other, ‘It is indeed a bad business, but I suspected yesterday how it was: he could scarcely get a word out as he was delivering his lecture; did you perceive?’—‘Yes, I saw him change colour, poor fellow;’ and everywhere, by every body, it was decided that the professor was mad. In this

* This manner of treating their crazy patients in a high fever, must give our modern physicians a strange notion of the tactics of their ancient brethren, and a good opinion of themselves.

situation numbers of his scholars went to see him, and among the rest Bucciolo, knowing nothing of what had past, agreed to accompany them to the college, desirous of acquainting his master with his last night's exploit. What was his surprise to learn that he had actually taken leave of his senses ; and being directed, on leaving the college, to the professor's house, he was almost panic struck on approaching the place, beginning to comprehend the whole affair. Yet in order that no one might be led to suspect the real truth, he walked into the house along with the rest, and on reaching a certain apartment which he knew, he beheld his poor tutor, almost beaten to a mummy, and chained down upon his bed, close to the fire. His pupils were standing round, condoling with him, and lamenting his piteous case. At length it came to Bucciolo's turn to say something to him, which he did, as follows : ' My dear master, I am as truly concerned for you as if you were my own father ; and if there is any thing in which I can be of use to you, command me as your own son.' To this the poor professor only replied, ' No, Bucciolo ; depart in peace, my pupil, depart, for you have learned much, very much at my expense.' Here his wife interrupted him : ' You see how he wanders, heed not what he says ; pay no attention

to him, Signor.' Bucciolo, however, prepared to depart, and taking a hasty leave of the professor, he ran to the lodgings of his relation, Pietro Paolo, saying, 'Fare you well! God bless you, my friend! I must away to Rome; for I have lately learned so much, at other people's expense, that I am going home;' and he hurried away, and fortunately arrived safely at Rome."

FOURTH DAY, NOVELLA II.*

THE last tale being concluded, it was observed by Friar Aurette, that it was really one of the most exquisite stories he had ever heard, far surpassing any which had been told. "I shall, nevertheless, venture to narrate one which I think will afford you some pleasure, though I cannot pretend either to invent or to repeat so good a one as yours.

"There lived in Provence, not many years ago, a gentleman of the name of Carsivalo, the lord of many castles, possessed of rare courage and prudence, and highly esteemed by the other chiefs and barons in the surrounding country. He was descended from a noble and ancient family, of the house of Balzo, and had an only daughter of the name of Lisetta, celebrated for her extreme beauty and accomplishments, above all ladies of her time. Many were the lords, counts, and barons, both young and valiant, sighing suitors for her regard. But on none had her sire, Carsivalo, yet cast his eye, whom he altogether

* A portion of the above story appears to have been suggested by the fifteenth tale of Sacchetti; and it is likewise to be traced in the celebrated collection of Poggio.

approved, and he therefore refused them all. In the same province resided the Count Aldobrandino, lord of the whole of Venisi, comprehending many cities and castles. He was upwards of seventy years of age, had no wife or children, and was extremely rich. Struck with the beauty of his friend Carsivalo's daughter, the count grew at length enamoured of her, and very willingly would he have led her to the altar, had he not felt ashamed, at his years, of suing to her, while so many bold and handsome youths were struggling for her in vain; wherefore he devoured his love in secret, not knowing what measures to pursue.

"Now it so happened, that holding a festival at which his friend Carsivalo, ever forward to express his fidelity and devotion to him, was present, the old count lavished upon him the most gratifying marks of regard, presenting him at the same time with noble steeds, birds, and hounds, besides other proofs of his favor. After this, he one day began to summon resolution to request his daughter from him, as it were in jest, while he and Carsivalo sat over their wine together. This he did in the following manner, assuming as youthful an air and countenance as he well could: 'I will tell you what I have been thinking of, my dear friend, without the least reser-

vation in the world ; for with you, indeed, I can have no secrets ; and there is perhaps only one thing which I need to care about, which is, that I am not quite so fresh and hearty as I have been, but yet that is not much ; and be it what it may, I will even tell you I should be glad, if you have no objection, to take your daughter's hand in marriage,—I should like to have her for a wife.' ' And I am sure,' answered Carsivalo, " I would very willingly give her to you, my friend ; only it might appear somewhat strange, considering the number of young fellows who are in pursuit of her, from eighteen to twenty-years of age, and who might all join in falling upon me, or becoming my enemies for ever. Besides, there are her mother, brothers, cousins, and relations without end, who may be no better satisfied, and perhaps the girl herself may have set her eye upon some one of those fresher sparks who are continually fluttering about her.' ' What you say is very true, friend Carsivalo,' returned the count ; ' but suppose you were to tell her she will be mistress of all my possessions ; yes, all I have in the world. I think, therefore, we had better find some method of arranging the affair amicably between ourselves.' ' Well, be it so,' replied Carsivalo ; ' let us consider of it, and to-morrow we will talk

about it again.' The enamoured old count slept not a wink all night, but lay devising schemes upon the subject, the result of which appeared on the following day, when he called early on Carsivalo, and said, 'I have discovered a plan; and it will not merely serve you for an excuse in bestowing your daughter's hand on me, but it will do you, sir, the highest honor.' 'Pray, what is it, my lord?' was the question. 'It is this,' returned the count; 'do you announce a grand tournament without delay, at which, whoever wishes for the honor of your daughter's hand, must come and fight; and so let her remain the victor's prize. Leave the rest to me; for I will find means of coming off the conqueror, and you will stand well in the opinion of all the world.' Carsivalo smiling, replied that he was content, and the count returned home. So at a fit season the young lady's father calling together his family and many of his relatives and friends, acquainted them that it was his intention to dispose of his daughter's hand, and consulted them in reference to the number of her suitors, chiefly consisting of the neighbouring lords and gentlemen of the province. 'Now,' he continued, 'if we venture to bestow her upon such or such a one, others will be affronted and become our enemies for life, saying, 'What, are we not as

good as that fellow?' and this will bring others upon us without end; so that our friends becoming our foes, there will be no living in the neighbourhood. For my own part I think we had better proclaim a tournament, at which whosoever shall have the luck to win her, in God's name let him wear her, and we have then done with it altogether.' The mother and the rest of her relations gave their consent, and the plan was approved of by all. Carisvaldo ordered it to be forthwith proclaimed: the conditions being, that whoever was desirous of obtaining his daughter Lisetta's hand in marriage, should attend a tournament to be held at Marseilles on the first day of May, the happy victor to bear off the lady as his prize. No sooner was the fame of this gone abroad, than Count Aldobrandino despatched a messenger in all haste to the king of France, requesting he would forthwith be pleased to send him one of his most doughty knights, the most invincible that could possibly be met with in feats of arms. In consideration of the count having always shewn himself a faithful adherent to the crown, and being moreover allied by blood, the king sent him a favorite cavalier, whom he had brought up from a child at his own court. His name was Ricciardo, sprung from the house of Mont Albano, long celebrated for

its knightly deeds. His directions were to comply with every thing Count Aldobrandino should choose to impose. The young knight soon arrived at the castle of the old lover, who, after bestowing upon him signal marks of his favor, revealed to him the affair which he had in hand. Ricciardo replied, 'I was sent by my royal master, to act in whatever capacity might be most agreeable to you: give your orders, therefore; it is mine to execute them manfully.' 'Then hear me,' said the count. 'We are preparing to give a tournament at Marseilles, in which it is my wish you should carry all before you, until I ride into the field, when I will engage you, and you must suffer yourself to be vanquished, so that I may remain victor of the day.' Ricciardo said, that it was his duty, however hard, to submit; and he continued privately at the castle until the hour arrived, when the old count again accosted him: 'Take this suit of armour, and go to Marseilles, and give out that you are a rich traveller, with steeds and money at will, and so conduct yourself like a valiant knight.' 'You may leave that to me,' returned Ricciardo; and he went out and cast his eye over the whole of the count's stud, where he found a horse that had not been mounted for several months, on which he suddenly vaulted, taking along with him what com-

pany he pleased. And he bent his way towards Marseilles; where he found the most splendid preparations made for the tournament. Thither were already gathered many of his young competitors, and blithe and proud was he who appeared more terribly beautiful than his compeers, while hautboys and trumpets everywhere sounded a shrill alarm, and the whole air seemed to be filled with music. Spacious was the plain staked out on which their respective prowess was to be displayed, and gay were the numerous balconies lifted up into the air around, with ladies and their lords, and tender maidens, watching the fearful odds of the field. And the fair and lovely girl, the wished-for prize, was led forth on the first of May, distinguished above all her companions, for her beauty and accomplishments. And now, also, rode forth her noble lovers, shining in arms, into the field, bearing various colours and devices, where, turn by turn, they assaulted each other with the most jealous rage. Among these Ricciardo was everywhere seen opening himself a passage, upon his fierce steed; and ever, as most experienced in feats of arms, did he come off the victor. Tremendous in assault and skilful in defence, by his rapid motions he shewed himself a complete master of his art. Every tongue was loud in his

praise, inquiring who he could be? The answer was: 'A strange knight, who lately rode into the field.' Still victorious, his competitors retired on all sides, unable to sustain the ferocity of his attack. In a few moments Count Aldobrandino entered the lists, armed cap-à-pie, and running full tilt at Ricciardo, trumpets sounding and handkerchiefs waving, he met him in mid career. After some blows dealt, as had been agreed upon, on both sides, the young hero appeared to quail under the count's sword; and having already seen the fair Lisetta, never had he done any thing with so ill a grace before. But he was bound to obey his sovereign's good pleasure, and consequently that of the count, who was now riding victorious over the ground with his sword unsheathed, his squires and other followers hailing him with shouts of triumph, the conqueror of the day.

"What then was the surprise of the spectators, when he raised his vizer! What the vexation of the young maiden, to behold the features of the aged count, who thus obtained the hand of the lovely maid of Provence! and bearing her to his castle with great rejoicing, celebrated his marriage with joyous dances and festivals, in honor of his bride.

"On poor Ricciardo returning from this very un-

pleasant service into France, the monarch inquired what he had been doing? 'Please your majesty,' replied the knight, 'I have just returned from a tournament, in which your old count has made me play a very mischievous part.' 'How is that?—in what way?' said the king: and his squire then related the whole affair, at which his majesty expressed the utmost surprise. 'You need not be astonished so much at what has happened, sire, as that I should have been prevailed upon to bear a part in it; for truly, sire, I never performed any thing with half so ill a grace, such is the exceeding beauty of the lady whom the deceitful count has made his prize.' The king on this seemed to consider a little, and then turning towards Ricciardo, observed: 'Never fear, it will turn out to have been a good tournament for you, after all; and let this suffice.'

"Now it happened, that the old count did not long survive the period of his union with the beautiful Lisetta, leaving her a young widow, without a heir to his vast domains. On this event she returned to her father's house, who received her with far less tenderness and affection than he had been accustomed to do. Supporting his strange and harsh conduct for some time, his daughter at length could not fail to remark it with equal vexation and sur-

prise. Resolved to speak to her father on the subject, she one day said, 'When I think how very fond of me you once were, and now behold the difference; for you seem as if you could scarcely bear the sight of me; believe me, I am far from being as happy as I was.' To this her father replied, 'It is I who ought rather to express my surprise at your conduct, daughter; for I once considered you a discreet and prudent young woman, when I bestowed your hand upon the count with such noble expectations of inheriting his vast possessions in your offspring.' But Lisetta answering him with much spirit, he merely added, 'Well, I am satisfied; but I shall take care to marry you very differently another time; that is all.'

"The whole of the deceased count's possessions coming to his relative and ally the king of France, the monarch, recalling to mind the courtesy and prowess shewn by his squire, Ricciardo, despatched a messenger to the lady's father in Provence, signifying his pleasure that the young widow should bestow her hand upon him. Carsivalo, being made acquainted with the truth, sent in answer, that he should be proud to act conformably to the king's wishes. The monarch then mounted horse with a magnificent train of nobles, and accompanied by

Ricciardo, journeyed into Provence, where he celebrated the union of the fair Lisetta with his own true knight, who afterwards received from the hands of his royal master, the territory of Aldobrandino as his lawful heritage, an arrangement that met with the approbation of all parties, nor least so with that of the lady, who lived long and happily with the valiant Count Ricciardo of Provence.

EIGHTH DAY, NOVELLA I.

MEETING on the eighth day at their usual spot, and it being the lady's turn, the fair Saturnina thus began :
 " I am now about to enter upon a subject of a more high and moral nature than we have hitherto, my dear Aurette, attempted, embracing the origin of the faction between the Guelf and the Ghibelline, and the manner in which the same pestiferous spirit of party spread itself into Italy, our own beloved country, as we have too fatally witnessed.*

" There formerly resided in Germany two wealthy and well-born individuals, whose names were Guelfo and Ghibellino, very near neighbours, and greatly attached to each other. But returning together one day from the chase, there unfortunately arose some difference of opinion as to the merits of one of their hounds, which was maintained on both sides so very warmly, that from being almost inseparable friends and companions, they became each other's deadliest

* Those stories, observes Mr. Dunlop, that recount the dissensions of Florence, are strikingly illustrative of its situation, of the character of its principal inhabitants, and of the factions by which it was distracted.

enemies. This unlucky division between them still increasing, they on either side collected parties of their followers, in order more effectually to annoy each other. Soon extending its malignant influence among the neighbouring lords and barons of Germany, who divided, according to their motives, either with the Guelf or the Ghibelline, it not only produced many serious affrays, but several persons fell victims to its rage. Ghibellino, finding himself hard pressed by his enemy, and unable longer to keep the field against him, resolved to apply for assistance to Frederiek the First, the reigning emperor. Upon this, Guelfo, perceiving that his adversary sought the alliance of this monarch, applied on his side to Pope Honorius II. who being at variance with the former, and hearing how the affair stood, immediately joined the cause of the Guelfs, the Emperor having already embraced that of the Ghibellines. It is thus that the apostolic see became connected with the former, and the empire with the latter faction; and it was thus that a vile hound became the origin of a deadly hatred between the two noble families. Now it happened, that in the year of our dear Lord and Redeemer 1215, the same pestiferous spirit spread itself into parts of Italy, in the following manner. Messer Guido Orlando being at that time chief ma-

gistrate of Florence, there likewise resided in that city a noble and valiant cavalier of the family of Buondelmonti, one of the most distinguished houses in the state. Our young Buondelmonte having already plighted his troth to a lady of the Amidei family, the lovers were considered as betrothed, with all the solemnity usually observed on such occasions. But this unfortunate young man, chancing one day to pass by the house of the Donati, was stopped and accosted by a lady of the name of Lapaccia, who moved to him from her door as he went along, saying: 'I am surprised that a gentleman of your appearance, Signor, should think of taking for his wife, a woman scarcely worthy of handing him his boots. There is a child of my own, whom to speak sincerely, I have long intended for you, and whom I wish you would just venture to see.' And on this she called out for her daughter, whose name was Ciulla, one of the prettiest and most enchanting girls in all Florence. Introducing her to Messer Buondelmonte, she whispered, 'This is she whom I had reserved for you;' and the young Florentine suddenly becoming enamoured of her, thus replied to her mother, 'I am quite ready, Madonna, to meet your wishes;' and before stirring from the spot he placed a ring upon her finger, and wedding her, received her there as his wife.

“The Amidei hearing that young Buondelmonte had thus espoused another, immediately met together, and took counsel with other friends and relations, how they might best avenge themselves for such an insult offered to their house. There were present among the rest Lambertuccio Amidei, Schiatta Ruberti, and Mosca Lamberti, one of whom proposed to give him a box on the ear, another to strike him in the face ; yet they were none of them able to agree about it among themselves. On observing this, Mosca hastily rose, in a great passion, saying : ‘Cosa fatta capo ha,’ wishing it to be understood that a dead man will never strike again. It was therefore decided that he should be put to death, a sentence which they proceeded to execute in the following manner :

“M. Buondelmonte returning one Easter morning from a visit to the Casa Bardi, beyond the Arno, mounted upon a snow-white steed, and dressed in a mantle of the same colour, had just reached the foot of the Ponte Vecchio, or old bridge, where formerly stood a statue of Mars, whom the Florentines in their Pagan state were accustomed to worship, when the whole party issued out upon him, and dragging him in the scuffle from his horse, in spite of the gallant resistance he made, despatched him with

a thousand wounds. The tidings of this affair seemed to throw all Florence into confusion; the chief personages and noblest families in the place everywhere meeting, and dividing themselves into parties in consequence; the one part embracing the cause of the Buondelmonti, who placed themselves at the head of the Guelfs; and the other taking part with the Amidei, who supported the Ghibellines.*

"In the same fatal manner, nearly all the seignories and cities of Italy were involved in the original quarrel between these two German families: the Guelfs still supporting the interest of the Holy Church, and the Ghibellines those of the Emperor. And thus I have made you acquainted with the origin of the Germanic faction, between two noble houses, for the sake of a vile cur, and have shewn how it afterwards disturbed the peace of Italy for the sake of a beautiful woman."

* In the original the novelist here proceeds to record the names, at great length, of the families who ranged themselves under the respective party banners.

THIRTEENTH DAY, NOVELLA I.

In the city of Pistoia, at the time of its greatest splendour, there flourished a noble family, called the Cancellieri, derived from Messer Cancelliere, who had enriched himself with his commercial transactions. He had numerous sons by two wives, and they were all entitled by their wealth to assume the title of Cavalieri, valiant and worthy men, and in all their actions magnanimous and courteous. And so fast did the various branches of this family spread, that in a short time they numbered a hundred men at arms, and being superior to every other, both in wealth and power, would have still increased, but that a cruel division arose between them, from some rivalry in the affections of a lovely and enchanting girl, and from angry words they proceeded to more angry blows. Separating into two parties, those descended from the first wife took the title of Cancellieri Bianchi, and the others, who were the offspring of the second marriage, were called Cancellieri Negri.

Having at last come to action, the Neri were defeated, and wishing to adjust the affair as well as they yet could, they sent their relation, who had offended

the opposite party, to entreat forgiveness on the part of the Neri, expecting that such submissive conduct would meet with the compassion it deserved. On arriving in the presence of the Bianchi, who conceived themselves the offended party, the young man, on bended knees, appealed to their feelings for forgiveness, observing, that he had placed himself in their power, that so they might inflict what punishment they judged proper; when several of the younger members of the offended party seizing on him, dragged him into an adjoining stable, and ordered that his right hand should be severed from his body. In the utmost terror the youth, with tears in his eyes, besought them to have mercy, and to take a greater and nobler revenge, by pardoning one whom they had it in their power thus deeply to injure. But heedless of his prayers, they bound his hand by force upon the manger, and struck it off, a deed which excited the utmost tumult throughout Pistoia, and such indignation and reproaches from the injured party of the Neri, as to implicate the whole city in a division of interests between them and the Bianchi, which led to many desperate encounters.

The citizens, fearful lest the faction might cause insurrections throughout the whole territory, in con-

junction with the Guelfs, applied to the Florentines in order to reconcile them ; on which the Florentines took possession of the place, and sent the partizans on both sides to the confines of Florence, whence it happened that the Neri sought refuge in the house of the Frescobaldi, and the Bianchi in that of the Cerchi nel Garbo, owing to the relationship which existed between them. The seeds of the same dissension being thus sown in Florence, the whole city became divided, the Cerchi espousing the interests of the Bianchi, and the Donati those of the Neri.

So rapidly did this pestiferous spirit gain ground in Florence, as frequently to excite the greatest tumult ; and from a peaceable and flourishing state, it speedily became a scene of rapine and devastation. In this stage Pope Boniface VIII. was made acquainted with the state of this ravaged and unhappy city, and sent the Cardinal Acqua Sparta on a mission to reform and pacify the enraged parties. But with his utmost efforts he was unable to make any impression, and accordingly, after declaring the place excommunicated, departed. Florence being thus exposed to the greatest perils, and in a continued state of insurrection, Messer Corso Donati, with the Spini, the Pazzi, the Tosinghi, the Cavicciuli, and the populace attached to the Neri faction, ap-

plied, with the consent of their leaders, to Pope Boniface. They entreated that he would employ his interest with the court of France, to send a force to ally these feuds and to quell the party of the Bianchi. As soon as this was reported in the city, Messer Donati was banished, and his property forfeited, and the other heads of the sect were proportionally fined and sent into exile. Messer Donati arriving at Rome, so far prevailed with his Holiness, that he sent an embassy to Charles de Valois, brother to the king of France, declaring his wish that he should be made Emperor, and King of the Romans; under which persuasion Charles passed into Italy, reinstating Messer Donati and the Neri in the city of Florence. From this there only resulted worse evils, inasmuch as all the Bianchi, being the least powerful, were universally oppressed and robbed, and Charles becoming the enemy of Pope Boniface, conspired his death, because the Pope had not fulfilled his promise of presenting him with an Imperial crown. From which events it may be seen that this vile faction was the cause of discord in the cities of Florence and Pistoia, and of the other states of Tuscany; and no less to the same source was to be attributed the death of Pope Boniface VIII.

Fobels of Massuccio Salernitano.

MASSUCCIO SALERNITANO.*

THE next in the series of Italian novelists, whose merit best entitles him to succeed Ser Giovanni, is an author, who like him, received the name of the place which gave him birth. For though it is certain he traced his family origin to Salerno, and was always esteemed a Neapolitan by his contemporaries, we are neither informed who, nor of what rank and situation in life, he really was. Nearly all the particulars, indeed, relating to his life and character, are rather to be inferred from the historical incidents and notices contained in his novels, than from any biographical details. From these it is clear that he flourished during the latter half of the fifteenth century, terminated his career about its close, and composed his work entitled "*Il Novellino*," as nearly as we can learn from the same source, somewhere about the year 1470. In his forty-sixth novel, for instance,

* *Il Novellino*: nel quale si contengono cinquanta Novelle in cinque parti divise: 1492.

forming one of our present selection, he treats of the enterprizes of Don Alphonso V., king of Portugal, against the Moors, as those of a contemporary prince, and in particular alludes to the capture of Arzilla, as an exploit recently performed. Now this is an historical event which occurred precisely in the year 1470; and in the same manner we may observe that our novelist commemorates several other princes and commanders, more especially of the family of Severino, who distinguished themselves during that age. Among these he mentions one of the name of Roberto, whose merits are particularly recorded in the close of his Novellino; the same on whom king Ferdinand conferred the principality of Salerno, wresting it from one of the Orsini family for this purpose. From similar reasoning we might believe Massuccio to have sprung from noble parents, occasional references being made likewise to this subject. The fourteenth novel thus makes mention of Messer Tomaso Miraconda, the author's grandfather, as a noble and respected cavalier; and a great number of his stories are familiarly addressed in the outset, to different lords and princes, such as the Sanseverini, the Carraccioli, and others. Among his more intimate acquaintance were Zaccheria Barbaro and Giorgio Contarino, count of Zaffo, two Venetian gen-

tleman. He is known likewise to have maintained a correspondence with the principal literary characters of his times, as we gather from some of the novels which he sent to Pontano, to Panormita, and other literary men. He was for some time in the service of one of the Visconti, then duke of Milan, a circumstance mentioned by the author in his eleventh story, where he addresses him by the name of his lord and patron. Some distinguished lady is also celebrated as "the tutelary angel, the light of this our Italic region," to whose auspices Massuccio commends his entire work; but whose title of Serene Highness has not been sufficient to designate with precision the individual, upon whom the novelist has lavished such high commendation. It is conjectured, however, from the author's own allusions, that she was either one of the consorts of king Giovanni of Sicily, or Isabella, the wife of his son Carlo.

It has been asserted by some critics, that Massuccio could have been no other than the Massuccio Guardato alluded to by Mazzella in his Description of Naples, and of the same opinion is Nicodemi, the supposed author of the Additions to the Biblioteca Napoletana of Toppi. However this may be, nearly all his stories are of an historical character, founded upon incidents either of a domestic or pub-

lic nature, which circumstance, added to their mode of relation, conveys a strong impression of their reality and truth. Though their style is extremely awkward and perplexed, there is a sincerity and earnestness of manner which seem to place the author above the charge of imitation; and inspire a stronger feeling than usually results from a mere fictitious narrative. We have moreover, the solemn but somewhat whimsical assurance of their veracity, in the author's own words, taking "heaven to witness that the whole of them are a faithful narrative of events occurring during his own times." This, however, ought to be taken with some grains of allowance, as it cannot be supposed to include the frame work, and the more ornamental portions of his novels, which it always lies within the discretion of the novelist, to manage so as best to awaken the interest or surprise of his readers. However much, in this respect, may be granted to the dramatic art and ingenuity with which Massuccio arranges his stories, he cannot boast the additional merit of a pure and easy style, possessed by so many of his predecessors. His language is sometimes indeed strangely diffuse and involved, and written nearly in a pure Neapolitan dialect, by no means to be held up as a model. Yet he assumes in the person of

Mercury the merit of having always imitated the beautiful and ornamental manner of the great poet and orator Boccaccio. We are informed by Doni, that probably with this view, he commented upon the whole of the first day of the Decameron. Had he flourished at an earlier period; he would doubtless have acquired a still higher character as a novelist than he now enjoys. He occasionally indulges a strong vein of ridicule in his incidents and descriptions, at the expense of the ecclesiastics; and in this portion of his stories are contained some of the author's happiest efforts. His title to originality has never been disputed, and the commendation bestowed upon him by Doni in his "Librerie," appears, as far as we can judge, to have been well merited: "Hail then to the name of Salernitano, who, scorning to borrow even a single word from Boccaccio, has produced a work which he may justly regard as his own." The character of originality, however, will scarcely extend to the plot of his "Marricotto and Giannozza," forming the thirty-second novel of his series, which must evidently have been taken from the old traditionary tale, traced as far back as Xenophon Ephesius, and both versified and dramatized long before the time of Massuccio. Yet he has the merit of having produced a beautiful novel out

of the naked materials afforded him by the annals of his country, and he has the additional merit of having furnished a model for the more finished productions of Luigi da Porto, and of our own Shakspeare. It is for this reason that the translator has not ventured to omit either of the Italian novels, though relating precisely to the same subject; that of Massuccio being the prototype of nearly all the succeeding imitations in different countries, and the other, from the pen of Da Porto, being entitled to insertion from the superior manner in which it is told. This last, imitated from Massuccio, was again copied by Bandello, and from him it was inserted in Belleforest's collection of tragic tales, and in this country in Paynter's Palace of Pleasure.

As the origin then of so many other productions, and the ultimate source from which Shakspeare drew his Romeo and Juliet, it would scarcely have been justifiable to have passed over the novel of Massuccio in a selection like the present. It is most probable that Shakspeare only obtained access to the work through the medium of some metrical histories, often wretched and corrupt versions of the Italian novels. The incidents of the story in the English drama, when compared with the original, do not appear to have been much improved upon, an ob-

ervation which will apply to all the plots of Shakspeare drawn from Italian sources ; and it is only to the magical charm of his language and sentiments, and to his power of swaying the passions at his will, that we are to ascribe his superiority.

MASSUCCIO SALERNITANO.

NOVELLA XX.

NOT many years ago there resided in Salerno a youth whose name was Giacomo Pinto, who though of noble descent, and dwelling in the vicinity of Porta Nuova, where the academy of sense, belonging to our city, was commonly supposed to hold its sittings, would have found a much more suitable habitation in the heights of our mountain district, where nearly all of our ancient families are said first to have drawn their breath. Now, though overburdened neither with wealth nor discretion, our hero was not wanting in a certain noble ambition, which spurred him on to lay siege to the affections of a young and pretty widow, related to our fellow-citizen Stradico. This, his first love, he contrived to conceal in such a manner, that not a child in all Salerno failed to perceive it, furnishing the most agreeable scandal to every party in the place. In fact he became the butt of all his acquaintance; but their darts were less keen than those of love, and heedless of

their point, he pursued his enterprize with a fervor and perseverance worthy of his ancestors.

Among others residing near him, who most amused themselves with observing the daily proofs of his folly during the progress of the siege, was a gentleman of the name of Loisi Pagano, whose great penetration and pleasing manners winning poor Giacomo's entire confidence, the latter often entertained him with the history of this his cruel passion. Perceiving the extravagant turn it had taken, Loisi began to think how he might employ the enamoured wight's folly to some useful purpose, in chastising the conceit of a certain upstart in Salerno, who took the name of Messer Angelo, and who, though only a farrier, had assumed the profession of a physician, trafficking in different parts of Italy, whence he returned home with the spoil of his dead patients. Conversing one day with Giacomo on the same eternal subject, he addressed the lover as follows : " You must surely, my dear friend, care very little about the sufferings you talk of, when you might so easily put an end to them. You know Messer Angelo is one of the greatest conjurors in the world, and I can give you a proof of it, inasmuch as I have happily consulted him on many occasions, and never been deceived. He is moreover your re-

lation, on the mother's side. Why not hasten to him, and prevail upon him with a little pleasing flattery, to exercise his art in your favour, by which you will infallibly arrive at the object of your wishes? Or if he should think of imposing upon you, as he has most probably done upon many others, you can give him such a lesson in return, as will teach him how to behave to gentlemen in future, and remember you ever after." Great was the joy and gratitude evinced by Giacomo on hearing these words; and, flattering himself with the happiest results, he promised to do every thing required of him. His friend Loisi then excusing himself, lost no time in finding Messer Angelo, to whom he communicated his plan, with no slight pleasure, thinking of the sport they were about to have. Little did Messer Angelo suppose, as he stood laughing, with what satisfaction Loisi was anticipating his chastisement, while he made poor Giacomo his dupe, and arranged measures before parting for executing their roguish scheme.

Not long afterwards the lover despatched a messenger for Messer Angelo, and told him in a lamentable voice his grand secret, already known to every body in the place, how sadly he pined in love; concluding with many sighs: "You know, my good uncle,

a friend in need is a friend indeed ; and I have been informed that you are a great magician, whose infinite skill, if you please, can easily deliver me from all my pains ; and so I beseech you, in the name of heaven, that you will take pity on me, that I may obtain the dear object of my wishes, and owe my life, and every thing I have, to you alone." With a cheerful countenance, Messer Angelo replied, he should be happy to do any thing in his power to serve him, and, among other things, at last addressed him thus : " But, my dear Giacomo, I am somewhat fearful of the result, as my plan would require, on your part, the utmost resolution and courage."

" Only tell me what it is," cried the lover, " for I declare I am ready to descend into the infernal regions, if necessary ; such is the strength of my love." " Nay," answered he, " it is worse than that ; for the truth is, you will have to hold a dialogue, face to face, with a ferocious demon called Barabas, the only one whom I have it at present in my power to summon for my commands." " Well," continued Giacomo, " I will, if you please, speak to Satan himself, who is greater, you know ; that is, if it be necessary." " Heaven grant you courage," cried the conjuror ; " but how are we to get the proper implements for the work ? We must have

a sword that has despatched a man in the first place." "Oh, I can get one of my brother's that has killed ten in its time," cried Giacomo. "Well, that is the most important," replied Messer Angelo; "we can easily provide the rest. However, let there be in readiness when I ask for them, a black and well-fed wether lamb and four fat capons, and check your impatience till the moon is in her wane. Leave the rest to me, for I promise you, you shall have the lady in your own hands, for better or worse, whichever you please." Overjoyed with such an offer, Giacomo vowed to have every thing in readiness as the necromancer had pointed out; who then repaired to Loisi, informing him of what had been fixed upon, in order to obviate any mistake that might arise. Often did they amuse themselves, before proceeding to work, with the simplicity of Giacomo, who hardly ever ceased for three days to tease the conjuror to commence the ceremonies. "Well, for my part, I am quite ready now," exclaimed Angelo, "but have you prepared what I enjoined you?" "To be sure I have," returned Giacomo, "and think myself very lucky too, for I have got the finest capons you ever saw from my lady cousin: and, better still, I can shew you a young wether as fat as a bull, jet black, with four great horns, enough to frighten you to look at."

Quite delighted, Messer Angelo observed, "Indeed, cousin, I hardly know you, love has so sharpened all your faculties at once. No one else could possibly have got together all the things requisite so very soon; but to night shall reward you: I will put every thing in order, and call for you when I set out."

Angelo then returned to Loisi, to tell him where he was to expect them, as all was fixed. It was no sooner night than the conjuror adjourned to the house of the lover, saying, "Would you like to come? It is quite time." He was answered in the affirmative; and seizing the homicidal sword, and placing the fat lamb on his shoulder, and a capon under each arm, he conducted the devoted lover into the midst of some awful ruins, where Loisi lay concealed, accompanied by several friends, in order not to engross the whole scene to himself. Here Messer Angelo, turning towards Giacomo, said, "Take notice, my friend, we are now advanced too far to think of retreating without the most imminent risk; so look you do not flinch, and, above all, beware how you call on the Lord or the Virgin; aye, or confess yourself either, for we should all sink down together into the bottomless pit. But if you should feel some qualms of fear, (and how can you help it?) address yourself to the Redeemer, for you will want one, and we may perhaps escape the

wiles of the wicked one." This our hero promised to do if possible, and the great necromancer then proceeded: "You must repeat, after me, exactly what I say; and when we have conjured him up, Barabas will give a loud cry, saying, 'Now, give me my supper,' and then throw the capons at him to stop his mouth, and send the wether after them, when the great horned beast roars out." This the lover promised manfully to perform, and the order being given, out sprung the murderous sword, drawing a vast circle on the ground, and strange hieroglyphics within, while strong sulphurous perfumes rose on all sides, and incantations dire, and contortions of hands and eyes were seen. "Put your left leg into the circle this moment, Giacomo, and tell me whether you would rather see him in all his horrors face to face, or hear him speak from the old castle window yonder." The poor lover, whose simplicity had brought him with such vast courage into the dilemma, hearing such an awful commencement, began to tremble, saying, "It would perhaps be enough at first to hear him speak;" advancing his foot at the same time into the circle, and, against the agreement, recommending himself to every saint in heaven. His master, perceiving that he already thought himself transported into the other world, ordered him three

times to pronounce the name of Barabas: the first only of which he effectually did. Loisi, in the disguise of the wicked one, then threw up a blaze of fire with a noise like thunder, enough to frighten the stoutest heart. Whether Giacomo wished himself at home again, there is little need to inquire; but encouraged by the conjuror, he called out a second time, when a greater conflagration than before met his view. Though his master failed not to observe the poor lover half dead with fear, he still urged him on, saying, "Fear nothing, the monster is well bound; he can do you no harm; so call him lustily for the third time," which, with the utmost exertion, he did; but in so faint a voice that it was scarcely heard. Loisi on this, having sent up a third fiery signal, uttered a terrible yell, that nearly put an end to the poor lover's life. But the master, reminding him that the demon was bound, bade Giacomo stand firm, and repeat the invocation exactly as he told him. When he tried to speak, his heart beat so violently that he could scarcely support himself: and Messer Angelo, fearing lest he had already carried things too far, began to lecture Barabas for being so very outrageous. But Loisi and his companions, almost dead with laughter, perceiving that the conjuror did not proceed, fearful of losing their sport, called out fiercely

for the fat lamb, and every thing they had. Then Messer Angelo, turning to the trembling lover, cried, "Throw him every thing you have; and fly for your life, without ever looking behind you." No sooner did Giacomo, who truly felt as if he were got into the wrong world, hear these joyous words, than flinging capons, lamb, and every thing else, into the demon's den, he took to his legs at a speed that defied all pursuit.

After he had arrived with some difficulty at home, Messer Angelo soon joined him, saying, "Well, what think you of my necromantic art? Come, speak, be of good cheer, we shall finish the business next time." "Say no more about it," cried Giacomo faintly, "I would not go back with you for worlds; so find some other way of conjuring the lady for me, and I shall be eternally obliged to you." "Well, be it so, returned Angelo, "I am determined you shall succeed, and will do every thing in my power to serve you." On which he left him to repose. Loisi, in the mean while, having taken the animals offered to him by way of oblation, dismissed his companions, and betook himself to rest. The next day he resolved to give a splendid feast with the help of these and other good things, in honor of Giacomo, and the friends who had witnessed the preceding

scene. The dinner hour being arrived, not a guest could refrain from laughter, when Giacomò, with great solemnity entered the room. Whispers, peals of laughter, and "Barabas, Barabas! make way for Barabas!" was echoed from side to side. Giacomo soon found he was the sole object of their merriment; on which Loisi, who had laid the whole scheme, saw that the time was come to execute his design of turning the tables upon the conjuror himself, and correcting him for many of his old faults. With this view, taking Giacomo aside after dinner, he acquainted him in a friendly way with every thing that Angelo had done to make him ridiculous in their eyes. Giacomò, bearing in mind Loisi's words, set off, with the most deadly intentions, to find the hated necromancer. Without saying a word, he seized him by the hair of his head, and throwing him down, began to punish him with a degree of severity which it was extremely difficult for the conjuror to bear. Leaving him for some moments senseless upon the ground, our hero in his passion seized upon a huge stone near him, which would for ever have terminated the conjuror's career, had not his friends approached to deliver him out of the lover's hands.

Recovering him from his rage, and aware of all the follies of which he had been guilty, Giacomo,

overcome with shame, retired to his own house; which he only left again to depart also from the city. Having disposed of his little property, he purchased for himself a steed and arms, and setting out for the seat of war, had the good fortune, aided by prudence and valor, to arrive at wealth and honor, esteemed by his comrades and commanders. For the whole of which he may be said to have been indebted to love and Messer Angelo; the latter of whom having received his just deserts, at the hands of Giacomo, it only remains for us to admire the very mysterious and miraculous powers of the blind archer-boy, who, with a little assistance from fortune, can confer so much happiness on those who enjoy his smiles.

NOVELLA XXXII.

THE following story was lately told by a Siennese gentleman to a party of lovely ladies, the relater being a character of no inconsiderable authority in the state. There was a young man of good family and accomplished manners, whose name was Mariotto Mignanelli, resident in Sienna, who had become deeply attached to a beautiful maiden, daughter of a very respectable citizen of the Saraceni family, belonging to the same place. After long and assiduous attentions, the youth had succeeded in gaining the young lady's affections, inspiring her with a passion scarcely less ardent than his own. But their eyes alone were permitted to avow the strength of those feelings, which overwhelmed the hearts of both, seeking vainly and anxiously for some happy event which might unite them never more to part. As discreet as beautiful, the young creature, disappointed in the consent of her friends, was prevailed on to yield her hand to him in secret, as the only means left of averting the broken-heartedness of separation, and securing the enjoyment of their wishes. An Augustin friar united their hands, bound over

to secrecy by the youth with no slight bribes. Their ensuing days were too delicious long to last. Fortune became envious of their happiness; for Mariotto, in a quarrel with another noble citizen, which from words proceeded to blows, was unlucky enough to wound his adversary mortally, and, to save his own life, was compelled to secrete himself, and to fly.

The court of Sienna, after instituting the strictest search, condemned the offender to perpetual banishment. The alarm, the grief, the tears of these young and inexperienced beings, thus rudely awakened out of their dream of life's sweetest joys, can be conceived only by those who, with similar feelings, have bade each other an eternal farewell; but cannot be described. Long and bitter was their parting; entranced in sorrow they lay sobbing in each other's arms; they struggled to part; but they caught each other's eyes, and again rushed back to embrace; when the fair bride bowed her head upon her lover's breast, and became lost even to her despair. Their grief having exhausted itself, he flattered her with hopes of returning to his country and his love; that though he left Italy, he should find a home in Alexandria, with his uncle, a wealthy and reputable merchant, whence he assured her he would write to her, and adopt such measures that they should not long re-

main divided; and thus, still shedding tears, they tore themselves away from each other. Immediately before he left his native shore, Mariotto took his brother aside, and, acquainting him with the whole affair, earnestly recommended his forsaken bride to his care, entreating to hear of her from him as often as possible, with the minutest accounts of every thing that might befall her; after which he went on board, and the ship set sail. Being received by his uncle with the most kind and joyous welcome, the exile soon made him acquainted with the history of his unhappy adventures. Listening with the utmost commiseration to the poor youth's story, the merchant, instead of vainly reproaching him for his past errors, with equal gentleness and prudence, endeavoured to console, and flatter him with hopes of future reconciliation with the families he had offended, though he did not pretend to disguise his fears on the delicacy of his situation, and the necessity for the strictest caution in his proceedings. He then entrusted to him some of his mercantile affairs, entertaining him in his own house, though not without much secret suffering, on the part of the young man, and many bitter tears shed by him, when alone, in spite of the letters he from time to time received from his deserted bride, or from his brother; the only hap-

piness he now possessed. In the mean while, however, the father of Giannozza, had been frequently solicited to bestow his daughter's hand on various suitors for her love, and though numbers had been refused, such flattering proposals were at length made, that the poor girl had no longer any color of excuse. In this wretched state of torture and suspense, death itself seemed to be far preferable to the life she endured ; and finding at last that there appeared no hope of her dear husband's return, and that to divulge the real truth would only be the ruin of both, a thought struck her, and she resolved, at every hazard both of life and reputation, however dreadful, to rescue herself from her impending fate. Inspired with a noble resolution, she signified her obedience to her father's pleasure. She then despatched a message for the monk, who had been the cause of all their sorrow in first uniting their hands, and secretly revealing her intentions, she besought his assistance in promoting her fixed resolve. He listened to her with surprise, and as is usual with his order, evinced some degree of timidity and indecision ; nor was it until he had swallowed a cordial to restore his flagging spirits, and beheld the glittering bait, that he could be persuaded to enter into her views. When he had heard the extremity to which she was reduced, the

friar, as time pressed, hastened in obedience to her orders to prepare a certain drug, the power of which, when mixed with water, was sufficient to produce a sleep deep and inanimate as death, which would continue during three days, and this he immediately despatched to the courageous and devoted wife. As soon as she had received it, she sat down and wrote to her husband a full account of her intentions, with regard to the manner in which she thus fearfully proposed, with the aid of the friar, to rejoin him. Then joyfully seizing the cup, she drank off the whole, and, shortly feeling a deep stupor stealing over her, she fell half unconsciously on her bed, as if she had breathed her last.

Her maidens coming into her chamber, with wild cries announced some fearful event, when her father, followed by some of his guests, burst into the room, and beheld his only and cherished child lifeless before his eyes. In vain were the physicians called in: after fruitless efforts to restore her, it was agreed by all, that she had fallen a victim to a sudden spasmodic affection of the stomach. She remained the whole of that day and the ensuing night in the same state, without shewing the least sign of life. The next, to the infinite grief of her parents and friends, no less than of numbers of the Siennese people, she

was interred with the most splendid rites and ceremonies in a grand vault in the church of St. Augustine. But about the hour of midnight, she was removed from this living tomb, by the venerable friar and one of his companions, and laid, according to the concerted plan, in his own chamber. The hour being come when the heavy drug was to lose its influence, she was with some difficulty restored by the trembling friar to life; and, awakening as from a dream, in three days she was enabled to set out on her meditated journey to meet one for whom she had periled so much. In the disguise of a monk she reached the port of Pisa, whence a convoy of ships was about to sail, which touched at Alexandria; and here she embarked. But driven back by contrary winds and other casualties, the vessels were compelled to seek port and to refit, being in this manner detained many months at sea. Gargano, the brother of the youthful husband, had, in the mean while, written to him according to his promise, a particular account of every thing relating to his beloved wife, and from this source had the unfortunate Mariotto received the overwhelming tidings of her sudden death. The minutest incidents were mentioned of the time and manner of her interment, and how her aged father, in a short time, had followed her to

the tomb. Unhappily, these letters were received before those sent by his dear Giannozza, unfolding her secret intentions, arrived: as if fortune had now utterly abandoned those on whom she for a moment smiled, these happy tidings fell a prey to corsairs, while the contrary ones reached their destination, overwhelming the young lover with unequalled sorrow and despair. In vain did his uncle offer him every consolation, in vain did he himself attempt to struggle with his grief; and he at length resolved to visit the grave, and weep over the memory of his beloved, till despair, or the more friendly laws which he had offended, should terminate his wretched days. In this way, and this way only, could he now flatter himself with rejoining her, whom alone he had loved on earth; her, who had sacrificed all her noblest prospects for the sake of calling him her own.

Thus resolved, he only awaited the sailing of the Venetian galleys for the west, in which, unknown to his kind relation, he had engaged his passage, and weighing anchor, after a short voyage to Naples, he fearlessly, or rather with the hope of death, advanced into the Tuscan territories, and in the disguise of a pilgrim soon entered Sienna. Here without acquainting any of his friends with his arrival, he sought at a seasonable hour the spot where rested, as

he believed, the remains of her he loved, and there weeping long and bitterly over her tomb, willingly would he have laid himself by her side, to have slumbered with her in death, to whom in life, though his own, he was forbidden thus near to lie. This feeling being ever present to him, he resolved at last to indulge it. Concealing himself one evening in the church, where he had deposited implements for his purpose, he issued forth at night to open for himself a way into the vault. As he was on the point of entering, the watchman in his morning rounds hearing some disturbance, approached the spot, and perceiving him thus employed, gave the alarm, which soon brought numbers of the priests, as well as laymen, half undressed, together. Opening the gates, they discovered the wretched husband within the vault, nor was it long before he was recognized for Mariotto Mignanelli. Being secured, reports of his arrival quickly spread abroad, which, reaching the senate, the public magistrate was immediately directed to take measures that the laws, applying to the culprit, should be put into force. He was accordingly conducted as a prisoner before the Podestà, and the torture being directed to be applied to enforce a true confession, the unfortunate youth gave an exact account of his unhappy adventures, which

although they awakened, especially among the women, universal compassion and regret for his unequalled fidelity and attachment, many offering themselves to suffer in his place, were nevertheless not permitted to interfere with the course of justice. He was accordingly sentenced to death, and, notwithstanding the intercession of his friends and relatives, was shortly after conducted to execution.

In the mean while his unhappy bride, undergoing extreme toil and sufferings, at length succeeded in reaching Alexandria, and immediately went to the house of her dear husband's uncle; and having revealed to him her sad story, was received with the utmost tenderness and compassion. But what was the anguish of her feelings, when, instead of embracing the beloved object for whose sake she had supported herself through such trying scenes, she learned that, receiving false accounts of her death, her husband had secretly left the place, and nothing had since been heard of him. She had borne toil and anguish, but every other grief had been light to this, this last of ills, which she could never have foreseen, and the shock of which it must be left to the feeling mind to imagine, since to express it is impossible.

Restored once more to herself, she received the kindness lavished upon her with showers of tears,

and consented, thus weeping abundantly, to be accompanied back by the good merchant, without loss of time, to Sienna; clinging to one desperate hope of being reunited to her lover, either living or in the grave. Resuming, then, once more the pilgrim's cowl and staff, this widowed and devoted bride again committed herself with the merchant to the dangerous seas; and now, alas! favoring breezes bore her onwards towards the Tuscan shores. They landed at Piombino, and thence hastened to a villa belonging to Ser Niccolo, the merchant, not far from Sienna. The first answer they received to their hasty inquiries was, that Mariotto had suffered the sentence of the law only three days before their arrival. However much they had feared, still they were far from being prepared to meet, such a confirmation of the calamity, and they were both too greatly afflicted any longer to console each other. The deep and incessant sobs of the unhappy lady would have melted the sternest heart; but it at length became necessary to resolve upon some step, and after affording her every consolation in his power, the kind-hearted merchant, with the advice of his friends, and the consent of the unhappy widow, removed her into a neighbouring monastery, where all the tenderness and attentions, which her birth and station re-

quired, were richly supplied. But never did she again look up amidst her sorrow: there she continued to weep over her loss, and the misfortunes she had endured; and receiving the consolation and caresses of the abbess, who had been informed of her sad story, in silent grief she daily faded away, and often calling piteously upon her dear husband's name, she not long afterwards expired.

NOVELLA XLIV.

I PROCEED to make you acquainted with an incident which occurred during the late campaign in Romagna, at a time when both parties were compelled to abandon military operations, and retire into winter quarters, owing to the severity of the season. One of the celebrated commanders, Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, found it requisite to occupy the Pisanese territories, whither he led his fine Arragonese army, and cantoned it among the towns and castles in the vicinity. According to the rules of war, as well as to further the interests of the League, he then proceeded to a personal inspection of several of the noblest cities and fortifications of Italy. Being everywhere received with marks of triumph and distinction, it happened, that in passing through one of these cities, he was so much pleased with its appearance and the acclamations of the inhabitants, that he resolved to sojourn there for some time. In the tournaments and festivals which distinguished this period, one of the duke's favourite friends, of high birth and rare endowments, whose name was Marino Caracciuolo,

bore no insignificant share. Gallantly riding at the head of his companions through the city, he chanced, among the beautiful faces that looked forth that day, to cast his eyes on one, whose youthful charms captivated his attention far beyond all the others. As he passed on, her idea still occupied his fancy, insomuch that he scarcely knew which road to take in order to find his way back. Frequently repairing however to the same spot, he so earnestly watched and followed her, that he attracted her attention, and at length prevailed upon her to return his favourable regards.

Marino was overjoyed when he discovered that she began to reward his passion. Resolved to avail himself of every occasion to promote his suit, among other means he announced a grand ball to be given in honour of his distinguished chief. Nearly all the ladies of the place were invited, and among these he had the delight of beholding the fascinating maiden, in honour of whose attractions the entertainment was really given. Nor was the duke himself less struck with her; and quite unconscious of his friend's attachment, he soon became so far enslaved by the surpassing beauty of her person and her manners, as to resolve upon obtaining her love at any price. The young lady, who had never before be-

held him, though she had more than once heard him highly commended for all the best and noblest qualities befitting a prince, was surprised to find that in magnanimity, courtesy, and heroic beauty, the reality so far outstripped the good report. She gazed upon him as the model of grace and noble manners; and mingled with the highest admiration, she offered up vows in her secret heart for his happiness and good fortune. Nor was it long before the prince perceived the impression he had made, and employed the evening so well, that before he took leave of her, they became perfectly aware of the feelings which they mutually entertained. After particular inquiries into her rank and character, these feelings soon ripened on both sides into the warmest passion, and being introduced into her society by means of the richest bribes and presents, the prince proceeded in his designs, scarcely doubting of ultimate success. In the mean while, the lady not only discountenanced Marino's visits, but everywhere treated him with the utmost indifference and scorn, which, contrasted with her previous kindness, threw the unfortunate lover into such a fit of jealousy and despair, that, giving a loose to his passion, he abandoned his military duties, and refused the society of his friends. Struck with this sudden change, the duke frequently ques-

tioned him as to its cause, but could obtain no satisfactory answer, until imagining that he had now the object of his pursuit in his power, he, as usual on such occasions, ordered his friend Marino into his presence, observing : " Though I find you are still unwilling to acquaint me with the real cause of your unhappiness, I shall nevertheless continue, as before, to confide to you every secret of my breast ; as a proof of which, learn that I am at this time engaged, within a few hours, to a beautiful young lady, whom I trust I may then call my own. I intreat you, therefore, no less from affection than from duty, to wear a less lugubrious face, and either inform me what is the matter with you, or shew a little more of your former cheerfulness. I shall not half enjoy my triumph if you do not accompany me ; so come, my friend, and protect me in this perilous enterprise, on which I should be unwilling to enter, without your assistance."

Quite overpowered with these words, Marino, regretting that he had so long and so ungratefully concealed his passion from his best friend and master, related the whole affair, not without great emotion pronouncing the lady's name. The duke listened to him with equal surprise and pain, considering within himself the strength of his friend's attachment,

who stood before him overpowered with remorse and grief. Then consulting his own duties and his dignity, and conceiving that his more exalted station demanded the exertion of a superior degree of generosity, he determined without the least hesitation, to prefer a lover's happiness to his own unbridled will.

"I doubt not you will do me the justice to believe, my dear Marino," said the duke, "that I never took so much real pleasure in any thing as in sharing my fortune with my friends. At least you shall now be convinced of it; for though I declare to you that I am passionately attached to this very lady, whom this evening I had prevailed upon to receive me to her arms, I shall not swerve from the line of conduct I have hitherto observed. I withdraw my claim, however much I may feel, for I cannot behold your affliction; so cheer up, my dear friend, and prepare to come along with me. Nay, no resistance: for I am resolved that before long you shall call our beloved girl your own. I have been much to blame, but you must forgive me, Marino, since I did not know that you loved her first. She is virtuous; we have only to get a priest, and she shall make you happy." On hearing this generous offer, Marino expressed the utmost gratitude; declaring at the same time that

he had rather die than think of interfering with any engagements which his Highness had thought it advisable to make. "No apologies are necessary," replied the duke, smiling; "and as I have said it, so it shall be;" and taking his friend's arm, the duke led him to the lady's house. Leaving a few of their followers, for further security, near, they were introduced into the presence of the woman they loved, who received the duke, advancing first, with unfeigned delight. Although she recognised her former admirer, she bestowed no further notice upon him than if he had been a stranger accompanying his master to receive his orders. But the noble duke introducing him to her with a smile, and taking her hand in the most affectionate manner, thus addressed her: "I entreat you, my dear lady, by the true love I bear you, not to be offended with what I am about to say, because I would only have you so far listen to my request as it is honest and of good report. Nor can you give me a stronger proof of your high regard for me, than by acceding to it. In my last interview with my royal father, before setting out on the present campaign, among other wise precepts, he most particularly insisted on the necessity of prudence, in regard to my allowing myself to be surprised or taken captive in the ambush of a lady's eyes; citing

many famous examples, besides that of the bold king Lancilao, of the bad effects of worshipping so tyrannical a deity as Love. And though I am inexpressibly grateful, and passionately attached to you, yet when I consider the late advice and injunctions of the king, the sorrow my love would entail upon you, and the sufferings of this my faithful friend and servant, whom nearest of all my followers I regard, it becomes my duty to inform you that he is deeply and desperately in love with you, and every way most deserving of your hand. But we are both yours; it is for you to decide; deal with us as you please;" and drawing his breath, after this painful effort, the prince remained silent.

Great, indeed, was the surprise and shock to the feelings of the lady, but being discreet and virtuous, although in this instance she had been somewhat carried away, she resolved to emulate the generosity of the noble duke, and making a virtue of necessity, and stifling her feelings, with a serene and cheerful countenance, she thus replied: "I shall not venture, my lord, to insist, as my excuse, upon the many noble and amiable qualities, which I confess, with tears of shame, have brought me into this condition; yet, indeed, you may believe me when I say that ambition was not my motive. I knew the distinction, the impass-

able barrier between us ; but I saw you loved me ; you addressed me, you followed me ; and—I could not help loving you again. But as it is your wish, and I cannot but the more admire you for it, who, being the son of a powerful monarch, and graced with beauty, power, and glory, resign voluntarily your wishes to another, I am ready to yield to your entreaties, my lord, (I had rather you would call them commands), in behalf of the friend whom you so much love. And if he can forgive me, if studying his will and happiness can at all atone for my past weakness,” (her sweet face was covered with tears and blushes,) “here, my lord, is my hand ;” and he placed it in that of his friend Marino.

NOVELLA XLV.*

ATTRACTED by the very distinguished and ancient reputation enjoyed by the university of Bologna, an eminent scholar of Castile resolved to visit that city for the purpose of obtaining the legal degrees. The young man's name was Messer Alfonso da Toledo, esteemed for his virtues, and in very easy circumstances; the recent death of his father, a noble cavalier, having left it in his power to furnish himself with every thing requisite for his studies. Thus, with handsome equipments, steeds, domestics, an excellent library, and a thousand gold florins in his purse, he set out upon his way to Italy. Passing in a few days, by way of Castile and Catalonia, into France, he arrived at Avignon, where he proposed for a short time to remain.

The next day, as he was proceeding from his inn, to amuse himself with observing the place, he chanced to behold, looking from a balcony, a very beautiful lady, whose equal he imagined he had never before

* Some of the incidents of this story appear to have been suggested by those contained in the second of the first day of the Pecorone of Ser Giovanni: *ante*, p. 291.

seen ; and as he passed along, her attractions were still present to his view. Such, indeed, was the impression, that abandoning all his laudable pursuits, he determined to remain in that place until he obtained some portion of her regard. By frequently passing her house, and throwing himself on all occasions in her way, he so far betrayed his attachment, that, being a very artful creature, she quickly perceived that she had him in her power. Aware of his youth and inexperience, as well as of his wealth and quality, she began to consider how she might best impose upon him, for her own interested purposes. And in order to engage more speedily in a conference, like some piratical vessel, sending out its boats to seize provisions for its voyage, she fixed upon a wicked old creature, well trained to the business, and seating herself in the window, prepared to observe the result. This it was that the poor youth most ardently desired. Before the old hag broke off the interview, she had learned every thing from him she wished ; and after various presents and messages had passed on both sides, it was agreed that he should be permitted to wait upon the lady the following evening, on the condition of bringing with him a thousand gold florins, as the price of the lady's conquest. When the hour arrived, this imprudent

and unfortunate young man was conducted to her dwelling, and received with apparent pleasure by its inmate, whose name was Laura, and there, unhappily for them both, he remained with her until the following day. And having arranged how they should in future meet, without fear of exciting the suspicions of her relations, the wretched youth reluctantly took his leave, and returned to his own abode.

The lady seized upon her spoils with triumph, and before her lover left her, so imposed upon his credulity by her arts, that having dismissed all idea of Bologna and its studies from his mind, he expected to have frequent access to her society. So the following evening, not in the least doubting of the same favourable reception, he hastened at the same hour to the lady's residence, and having repeated the signal of his arrival without effect, he was at length compelled, however unwillingly, to retire with the loss, no less of his wealth and honour, than of his beloved object; and, stung with rage and grief, slumber refused to visit his eyes during the whole of that unhappy night. Resolved the next morning to ascertain this cruel treachery, he again visited the fatal house, where he found both doors and windows closed, in confirmation of all his worst fears, that he had been vilely abandoned and be-

trayed by the artful woman to whom he was so passionately attached. He returned to his friends and followers full of desperate thoughts against himself, which, stifling with the utmost difficulty, he prepared to leave the place. And being quite destitute of means to discharge his expenses, he was compelled to dispose of one of his finest mules. Having thus satisfied his host, with the trifling resources which yet remained, he proceeded on his way through Provence towards Italy, plunged in the deepest grief at the thoughts of having to travel to Bologna, and to reside there as a poor student, instead of making the noble figure he had expected. As he went thus full of grievous thoughts along his weary way, being arrived at Trayques, he had the singular fortune to take up his residence at the same inn where the husband of the artful Laura had just entered for the night. He was a handsome and accomplished cavalier, of distinguished eloquence, and great authority in the state, and was then returning from an embassy sent by the King of France to the Pope. Having begged the host to inform him should any noble traveller alight, in order to enjoy his society at table, a custom always observed by travellers from France, he was told that there was a Spanish scholar going to Bologna, who, according to the account of his

domestics, appeared buried in the profoundest sorrow, having scarcely broken fast for the last two days. On hearing this, the cavalier very good-naturedly determined to invite the poor youth to sup with him, and, becoming his own messenger, he introduced himself into his room, where he found him seated in a disconsolate attitude; and taking him affectionately by the hand, entreated he would favour him with his company to supper. The youth perceiving from his appearance that he was a person of some importance, could not refuse, thus invited, to accompany him; and sitting down together, when they had concluded their meal, they dismissed their domestics from the room. The ambassador then ventured to inquire into the object of the young man's travels, and next, as far as delicacy allowed, into the cause of his apparent affliction. Messer Alfonso, in great emotion, replied with difficulty to his first question, entreating to be excused from touching upon the latter. But his new friend, having learned the reason of his leaving home, and the high respectability of his family, became still more solicitous to discover the origin of the excessive melancholy which seemed to overpower him. After frequently evading his questions, the youth was at length persuaded by the deep interest he evinced in his wel-

fare, to confide to him the whole of his unhappy adventure, with the lady's name, and the manner in which he had been entertained by her ; adding, that the disappointment he felt at being thus betrayed, and the loss of all his resources, had driven him to the verge of despair. The cavalier, who had thus unconsciously insisted upon the knowledge of his own dishonour, at these words, soon presented a far more distressing picture of wretchedness than even the author of his disgrace ; and it is for high-minded men alone, who may have survived the loss of honour, to appreciate the real nature of his feelings. But with his usual prudence and self-command, he checked the impulse of his feelings, adopting with singular promptness the line of conduct which he conceived such an emergency required. Then turning towards the youth, he thus addressed him : " You have, indeed, young man, given a loose to your passions in a very reprehensible manner, and fallen into the snares of a vile wretch, whom, from your own statements, you should have avoided with the utmost care. Could my severest reproaches now avail you, I should never cease to condemn your folly ; but as you are in far greater want of assistance than of blame, it will be enough to leave you to the remorse such conduct cannot fail to produce.

Cease however to entertain the desperate thoughts you have already too much indulged ; and you shall find that in the end I will become your real friend, and treat you no otherwise than if you were my own son. And as you may perceive I am a foreigner, bound to pursue my route, excuse me if I cannot be at your disposal, and do not object to accompany me back the way you came. Come to my house for a few days, and I then promise you that you shall pursue your first intentions with far more pleasure than you at present believe. For the reputation of your family and your father's noble character will not permit me to behold his son proceeding thus unhappily to commence his studies, unable to support the respectability of his name, and the virtues to which it has ever been allied." Surprised at these proofs of kindness, the youth expressed his gratitude, as far as mingled grief and shame permitted him to give utterance to his feelings. They then separated for the night, and the next day set out on their way towards France, travelling so speedily under the direction of the cavalier, that they arrived, ere night-fall, in the city of Avignon. The cavalier then taking the young man's arm, immediately conducted him to his own house, the fatal house whither he had before resorted ; and recog-

nizing the spot, he beheld the same lady advancing with lights in her hands to welcome her husband home. Aware of the whole truth, he immediately gave himself up for lost; and being scarcely able to alight from his horse, the cavalier assisted him, and led him trembling into the same apartment, the scene of his guilty pleasures, and now, of his bitter and inexpressible remorse. The wife, starting back at the sight of the student, stood, as if conscious of her impending fate; and it would be impossible to describe the grief and terror at that moment depicted on her countenance. The supper made its appearance, when they sat down, together with the lady, all in their secret thoughts indulging varied feelings of pain. The supper table being withdrawn, the cavalier turning towards his wife, thus addressed her: "Laura, bring me the thousand gold florins which this young person gave you, and for which you bartered, together with your person, your own honour, and mine, and that of all our family."

On hearing these words, the lady appeared as if she were sinking into the earth, and was unable to utter the least answer. Her husband then fixing his eye upon her with a stern expression, and seizing his dagger, exclaimed: "Thou vilest of women, as you value your life, this moment do as I have com-

manded you." Marking his rising passion, his wife, overpowered with fear, and weeping bitterly, dared not even deny the fact; and going out immediately, returned with the money, which she laid with a trembling hand upon the table. Having examined it, her husband took one of the pieces, and presented it to the young man, who stood speechless with fear, momentarily expecting, together with the lady, to feel the fatal dagger at his heart. As he presented the coin, the cavalier thus continued: "Every one ought to be rewarded for his pains; and as this lady was at the trouble of entertaining you both with love and scorn, and may deservedly be ranked with the vilest of her sex, who do not deserve to receive more than one ducat at once; I beg that you sir, who hired her, will please to pay her what I have given you." And compelling his wife to receive it, it was so done. Then perceiving the young man to be quite oppressed with fear and shame, his eyes fixed upon the earth, and his voice convulsed with sobs, he continued: "Take your ill-guarded and ill-spent gold, poor youth, and remember for the future to employ it better than in purchasing your shame, instead of acquiring the reputation and honour which your family has a right to expect. Aim at nobler pursuits, signor! But I

would not willingly distress you; you require rest, and you may sleep under my roof secure. I give you my hand, as a man of honour: leave us; good night!"

The unhappy youth was then shown into a richly furnished apartment, with every attendance and convenience; but his thoughts were of too wild a nature to admit of repose. Often did they wander back to the last looks of the associate of his guilty pleasures; often did he start up in terror as if he had heard her voice: he was indeed safe; but the light of morning never again broke upon that lady's eyes.

The following day, the cavalier, having prepared for their departure, accompanied the youth about ten miles beyond the city, and on taking leave, presented him with various rich presents, saying: "Although I have granted you your life, no less than the fortune you had lost, I cannot feel easy in parting with you, unless you consent to receive from my hands these trifling gifts, together with this horse, as a recompense for the sale of your mule. In token of my pity for you, and in consideration of the sufferings you have incurred, deign to accept them, and henceforward consider me in the light of a father; as I shall continue to feel the same interest in you, as if you were really my son." And then ten-

derly embracing the poor youth, whose continued sobs and tears choked his utterance, he took a sorrowful leave of him, imposing only perpetual silence, as to the events which had just taken place. Unable to thank him, the youth pursued his way to Bologna, while the cavalier returned to the city of Avignon. But never having been made acquainted with the after fortunes of either party, I refrain from adding any thing further on the subject.

NOVELLA XLVI.

THE memorable enterprises and numerous victories of the Christian princes of Portugal in the regions of the east, are celebrated throughout the world. How frequently have their proud fleets crossed the seas, bearing their veteran armies to the field of conquest, upon Moorish ground ! And as no monarchs have surpassed them in their chivalric ardour to spread the banners of the faith, so their prowess is in no want of such commendation as mine, to go down with honour to posterity. But passing over their ancient conquests, I propose to treat of the history of the invincible monarch Don Alfonso, who, occupying the powerful city of Agalser Segher, and other strong places, which had been conquered by the king his father, in the kingdom of Fez, prepared to reduce the great city of Arzil. But when he had just brought it to terms of capitulation, he was informed that the King of Fez had despatched one of his own relations, a prudent and valiant captain, idolized by the Moors, at the head of a noble army, to the succour of the besieged. On the approach of Mole Fez, Don Alfonso, unwilling to await his

attack, broke up his entrenchments, and having arrayed his forces, marched forth to meet him, leaving only a sufficient number to carry on the siege. About sunrise on the second morning, these two great armies came in sight of each other, and instantly preparing for action, a long contested and very sanguinary battle ensued, which at length terminated in the rout of the Moors. Their loss was enormous; and their commander, scorning to desert the field, was taken prisoner, fighting to the last, and covered with wounds. Such a capture was esteemed by his adversary no less glorious than the victory itself; as he was in hopes that the Moors, deprived of their greatest captain, would no longer be in a condition to resist him. For this reason, after the fall of the city of Arzil, he resolved to detain Mole Fez, in an easy and honourable captivity for life. Tidings of this fatal engagement having reached the king of Fez, in the utmost haste and terror he despatched an embassy to Don Alfonso, entreating him, that if he were so uncourteous as to refuse to deliver up his noble prisoner, he would at least fix the price of his ransom, presenting to the king at the same time, many rich gifts, as an earnest of his worth. The king, however, in very few words, replied, that having deliberated on the matter, he had

fully resolved never to yield him up; and that any proposals, of whatever nature, would be made in vain, as he should not even receive them.

On obtaining this final reply, the mother of the Moorish chief, though she despaired of beholding, much less of rescuing, her only and dear-loved son, nevertheless resolved to omit no means which wealth or ingenuity could supply, to restore him to freedom and to his friends. After long deliberation, relying on her own resources, she determined to summon her train of ladies and other followers; and having made every preparation, she set out for the Christian camp. The cavalcade arriving at the royal tent, the courtiers, not a little surprised, proceeded to inform the king, who gave orders to receive the princess with all due honor and respect. When, after some discussion, she was admitted to an audience with the king, she addressed him at once in a noble and gentle strain, and to the following effect: "I doubt not, most noble prince, you are surprised that I should venture in this sudden and confident manner to appear before you; but if your majesty will deign to hear the reasons which have moved me to this strange step, I trust I shall rather awaken your compassion than your surprise. A prince, upon whom heaven has bestowed your majesty's reputed wisdom,

cannot fail to have observed the extent of a mother's wretchedness, of her unutterable woe, when suddenly deprived of her offspring; but, alas! how much more when she loses the only child she possessed in the world. - Such an afflicted and unhappy mother am I! with no hope of comfort, save in the fame of your majesty's generosity and clemency, which have inspired me with confidence, and thus brought me a suppliant at your feet. And as I doubt not such fame has justly informed me, that faith and honor are the objects for which you combat, and virtue the law which you observe; by these I conjure you, most noble prince, to listen to a mother's woes, and restore to her, in your mercy, her only and darling son. I feel too well that no ransom can be offered equal to a mother's delight in clasping her lost one to her bosom: wherefore, my dear lord, I have only brought you, with a woman's feeble power and heart, the whole of my slight possessions, if you will deign to receive them, and bestow them in the entertainment of your chivalric followers. You will thus no less restore my son than myself to life and freedom, and we shall ever hold ourselves, as far as our sacred laws permit, at the service and disposal of our liberator."

Struck with the singular prudence and sagacity

displayed in the conduct of the Moorish princess, although his followers advised him to seize her as his prisoner, the king, consulting the honor and dignity of his station, resolved to sacrifice them to no views of interest, and with cheerful looks replied as follows: "The noble confidence you have reposed in me, gentle lady, in thus appearing before me, together with the sorrowful motives of your arrival, have so far conquered my reluctance to listen to your proposals for the liberation of your noble son, that I now freely restore him to your arms, on the condition of his aiding me in my present enterprise; or if he should be unable to accept these terms, that he will no longer advance to combat against my banners."

The princess expressed her gratitude in the most eloquent terms; at the same time adding, that she would not deceive so kind and generous a prince by pretending to engage for the performance of actions which rested in the power of another; but that his majesty might be assured that both she herself, and every thing she called her own, would henceforth be wholly at his command, and that she trusted, moreover, so to influence her beloved son, that the conditions should be inviolably preserved, even unto death. This high-minded reply was extremely pleasing to

the liberal feelings of the king. Esteeming her more highly than before, he commanded the Moorish chief to be introduced, and after witnessing the mutual and unbounded raptures of the mother and the son, turning towards the latter, he explained the conditions on which, as his friend and ally, he might become free. Unmoved at these words, Mole Fez immediately replied: "*It would be idle to give thanks, most excellent prince, for offers for which no gratitude, no services, can yield adequate return. But as I hold myself more bound to the laws of my country than to any existing circumstances, or to any terms that can be imposed, so I might be again called upon to fight the battles of that country; a call which I could not resist, whatever new obligations stood in my way. Heaven forbid it then, that I should accept terms it might not be in my power to observe. I should still esteem myself a prisoner, a captive in soul, though free; and were I to serve you, both present and future times would say I had been your slave. In the name, then, of that nobility which you may justly boast, I entreat you either to let me go, free as the airs of heaven, or to plunge me again into captivity, to terminate my days in solitude.*"

Recognizing, in the chieftain's words, the same

loftiness and truth of character which distinguished his parent, and fired by their noble example, the victorious monarch exerted his generosity to the utmost, and advancing from his seat, exclaimed, "No, neither of you are my prisoners: you are free: with the whole of your treasures, without a single promise, you are free. Return with your excellent son; for you are deserving of it, lady: you know how to appreciate the liberality of kings. You threw yourself and your fortunes at my feet, and you shall never find such confidence in my virtue misplaced; to abuse it would be to fix a stain upon my crown and upon my memory. It remains with yourselves to be at peace or war with me; for I trust in my own good sword, without the aid of Mole Fez, to achieve the enterprize I have in view." The monarch then dismissed them, full of gratitude, with many valuable proofs of his kindness, and they hastened joyfully to meet their friends, who expressed the utmost astonishment on beholding them. The courts and the public places were everywhere thronged, to catch a sight of the mother and the son as they passed along; and the Moorish king, the princess, and the whole people, never ceased to extol the magnanimous virtues and chivalry of the christian prince, Don Alfonso. But Mole Fez and the

lady did not stop here; for, in the ensuing season, raising a powerful army, they passed over to assist the Portuguese monarch in his approaching campaigns. Great was his surprise and pleasure at their arrival, and receiving his noble allies with marks of the highest respect and favor, he ever afterwards esteemed Mole Fez in the light of his own brother. Seldom, indeed, were they seen apart; in battle they fought at each other's side, and in peace they were friends and companions; and such was the gratitude and loyalty of Mole Fez, that he devoted himself to the interests of the christian monarch, serving him with fidelity as long as he lived.

NOVELLA L.

THE last in my collection of those noble and virtuous actions, which I have always been desirous of commemorating, is one related to me by a distinguished foreigner, which, as being strictly true, it is with equal pride and pleasure I proceed to detail. There resided some time ago, in the famous city of Toledo, a cavalier named Messer Piero Lopez d'Aiala, of high and ancient lineage, whose only son, a fine and spirited youth of the name of Aries, had the misfortune to engage in a nocturnal brawl. Both parties, in one of which was the king's particular favourite, drawing their swords, Messer Aries, engaging with the latter, passed his weapon through his body on the spot. On discovering the rank of his adversary, aware of the royal favour enjoyed by him, and dreading the indignation of his monarch, the youth resolved to take to flight, and being furnished by his father with horses and attendants, he set out to try his fortunes in another land. And hearing of the sanguinary war then waging between the English and the French in the territories of the latter, he resorted without delay to the scene of action, burn-

ing with the hope of signalizing himself during the campaign. Arriving in the French army, he had the good fortune to alight at the quarters of the Count d'Armignac, captain-general of the king's forces, and related to the royal house of France. With his permission, the young Castilian employed the remains of his small resources in equipping himself for battle, in which he so greatly signalized himself, both by his courage and his conduct, as well in open field as in the siege, that he became at once admired and celebrated by his own party, and dreaded by his adversaries. In the course of time he rose so high in the esteem of his commander, no less than of the French monarch, that he was entrusted and honoured above any other favourites of the court, being in a little while promoted to the rank of campo major, and acquitting himself in such a manner that he was consulted in almost every action. The campaign being concluded with great honor and advantage on the part of the French, with the aid of the young and enterprizing Castilian, both armies were compelled by the severity of the season to retire into winter quarters, and with the chief part of the general officers and cavaliers, our noble adventurer sought the gaities of Paris.

In order to celebrate his successes in the most

popular way, the king sent an invitation to all his chief lords and barons to be present with their ladies at an appointed festival, along with their followers and companions in arms. First in the train of favourite nobles, magnificently arrayed in the honors he had won, appeared the Count d'Armagnac, accompanied by his lovely and only daughter, whose charms attracted every eye. The joyous and splendid feast began, and was celebrated throughout many happy days, with all the pleasures which love, and mirth, and music could afford; and still the star, whose brightness eclipsed the beauties of the rest, was the eye of the count's fair daughter. And as if to shew that her taste was in no way inferior to her beauty and accomplishments, having glanced her eye through the ranks of youth and chivalry marshalled around her, it ever returned and rested on the fine features of the Spanish cavalier, the music of whose fame and virtues had already sounded sweet in her ears. Too incautiously dwelling on these, the loved idea took her fancy captive, until she at last became so deeply interested in him, that whenever she passed the day without seeing or conversing with him, she felt her existence a burden to her. Possessing no one in whom she could confide, in spite of all her struggles, her feelings, when in his presence, half be-

trayed the secret which preyed upon her heart: her eyes, her voice, and her very motions, when in his presence, or addressing him, all expressed far deeper and softer emotions than language dared to reveal. Nor was the object of them either so cold or so inexperienced, as not to be sensible of the impression he had made. But although he thought her the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, the numerous favours he had received from the count, her father, were so great as to banish every idea of his own gratification, in attaching her affections to himself. With this virtuous resolve, he affected to misunderstand the nature of her impassioned feelings, assuming an apparent calmness in his manners, and a coldness, which struck a pang to the unhappy lady's heart. Unable longer to contend with the variety of emotions which shook her bosom, and hourly preyed upon her life, she resolved, with the impulse of despair, to upbraid him for his cruelty, to unfold her love, and to die. And half effaced with blinding tears, she committed her unhappy secret to paper, filled with the very soul of wretched passion, an appeal which no heart of marble, much less that of a fond lover, could have withstood. The conclusion was, that she had resolved to die, rather than to survive the weakness of betraying her unhappy love.

The young page to whom she confided the letter, conceiving from her manner that it contained something of high importance, and fearful of the result, bore it immediately to the count his master. It is impossible to express her father's surprise and grief, on learning the extravagance and folly of which this his only daughter had been guilty; but every noble spirit, shunning infamy and disgrace beyond death itself, may form some idea of his sensations. In this afflicting circumstance he adopted and rejected a thousand various plans of punishing his unworthy child; but as he felt that it ought to be something proportionate to the intolerable pain which she had thus inflicted upon him, he first determined to try the worth and firmness of the young Castilian, and took his measures accordingly. Having carefully wrapped and sealed the letter, he returned it to the boy, with orders to deliver it to Messer Aries, and having waited for a reply, to bring it immediately back to him. These orders being promptly complied with, the young cavalier received it with a throb of extasy, as he caught the name of his beloved; yet having already prepared his mind by strict discipline and self-control, he persevered in braving the fascinating danger. Armed strong in rectitude, he replied with all the delicacy and honor

of a true knight, to the lady's letter, beseeching her in conclusion rather to inflict any kind of punishment upon him, even unto death, than tempt him either in thought or word, to presume on what might offend the honour and dignity of the count her father. Dreading nevertheless to hurt the feelings of her he loved, and aware of the fatal consequences of scorned or disappointed affections in a woman's soul, he implied the high honour and gratification he should have experienced in indulging such lofty hopes. "Would you venture," he continued, "to throw yourself upon your father's confidence, revealing to him every feeling of your breast, (fully sensible as I am of the inequality of our lot) and were it possible that he should smile upon our loves, then, only then, might we pronounce ourselves blest; but otherwise forget me, hate me; for when I dwell on the obligations I owe to your father, neither beauty nor ambition, nor any charms or treasures upon earth, shall lead me to sully, in any manner or degree, the brightness of his name."

Having despatched his answer by the same discreet little messenger, he awaited in much fear and anxiety the result of the strange circumstances in which he was so deeply engaged. The page instantly ran to his master with the above reply, whose pre-

vious sorrow and indignation were much diminished on perusing the noble sentiments entertained by the cavalier, and such was his admiration and regard, that he even became gentle and loving as before to his beautiful, but weak and unhappy girl. Under these feelings, without saying a word to his daughter, he hastened into the presence of his sovereign, to whom in no slight agitation he recounted the whole of the affair; and after unfolding his own feelings and sentiments on the subject, he entreated that the king would graciously deign to offer his advice. Gifted with great natural sagacity and prudence, the monarch expressed himself by no means surprised at the weak conduct shewn by the young lady, being nothing, he declared, very strange or unusual; but he could scarcely prevail upon himself to believe the extraordinary resolution and constancy displayed by the cavalier. However high he had estimated his worth, he had never imagined him capable of such true greatness of soul, in thus sacrificing both ambition and love at the shrine of duty and fidelity.

The king then advised, or rather commanded, him to adopt the most generous resolution in his power; and sending forthwith for the noble Castilian, he closed the door on his attendants, and seizing him af-

fectionately by the hand, he exclaimed : “ I have long been sensible, Aries, of your high worth, evinced in all your actions, since you first joined my armies, under the patronage of the count. There has been nothing wanting to complete the excellence of your character, save an occasion to display the hidden force and rectitude of your principles, in the trial of which you have acquitted yourself so nobly, so honourably, and respected the persons whom you loved. I am rejoiced to think that your virtues in peace are equal to the courage and skill you so well displayed in war. We are truly indebted to you, and must endeavour to find such a reward as you may like; such as may evince our gratitude for your good deeds, and hand down your virtue to other times. I have heard the whole of your generous conduct from the lips of the count, and if nobility of mind, and the best qualities of the heart may entitle you to the lady’s love, you not only deserve her, but the very highest and richest princess in the state. But she is beautiful, she loves you, and you are at liberty, when you so please, to take her for your wife.” The count then likewise came forward, and confirming every thing the king had said, tenderly embraced the cavalier, considering himself honoured in possessing such a son-in-law.

Equally surprised and rejoiced at the unexpected turn of affairs in his favour, the Castilian, with singular modesty, replied, " Although I am aware that the high authority of your majesty, and the noble qualities of the count, are sufficient to exalt me to any degree of rank, I am, at the same time, too sensible of the inequality of my own birth and fortunes to venture upon such a step as you have generously proposed. Permit me to be near your majesty, and to serve you to the utmost of my ability, as I have hitherto done; but let your majesty and the count both take it again into consideration how far the subject of your favour may be worthy of so high an honour." But the generous monarch persisted in his intentions, and in order to bring the affair to a speedy and happy termination, he commanded that a sumptuous festival should be held the ensuing day in his palace, which took place in the most gay and magnificent style. Proud trains of lords and cavaliers, and gay beves of ladies, with music, dance, and song, gave life and spirit to the scene. In the midst of these proceedings, the fair daughter of the count, who had remained ignorant of all the previous explanations, was led forward, arrayed in her bridal ornaments: at the same moment, Messer Aries, the Castilian cavalier, was proclaimed, by the heralds

without, to the applauding people, captain-general of the king's armies, and immediately afterwards the monarch presented the young bride at the altar, where the noble cavalier received her hand.

The most rapturous surprise and joy beamed in the eyes of the lovers and the guests, as this novel and happy ceremony was announced through the assembly. The feast and the dance revived with double spirit. Congratulations, commendations, and inquiries, poured in on all sides, upon the happy parties, until their union became the favourite topic no less of the court than of the people. Murmurs of applause ran through the rooms as the cavalier led forth his beautiful and happy bride to reap, at her father's castle, the fruits of his virtue and his valour.

END OF VOL. I.

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